

LIBERTARIAN PARTY NEWS

The Party of Principle®



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Costa Rican Libertarian visits LP office

■ Costa Rican Libertarian Otto Guevera (r) meets with LP Executive Director Joe Seehusen at the Libertarian Party's national office in Washington, DC on July 24.

Guevera, who served two terms in Costa Rica's national legislature, was in town to speak at various Libertarian organizations, including the Cato Institute, Citizens for a Sound Economy, and the Institute for Humane Studies. He also met with U.S. Rep. Ron Paul.

Seehusen said, "Otto is an extremely warm and charismatic man, and it's easy to see why he's so popular. He is actively seeking campaign assistance and funding from U.S. Libertarians, and believes he has an outside chance of winning the multi-candidate presidential race in 2006."

Guevera was selected by *La Nacion* — the country's largest newspaper — as Congressman of the Year in 1999. He later left that office because of term limits.

Currently there are five Libertarians in Costa Rica's 57-member National Assembly. For information about the Costa Rican Libertarians, visit: www.libertario.org/en.

Three LP candidates on Calif. recall ballot

By Bill Winter
LP NEWS EDITOR

Three Libertarian candidates will be on the ballot in California's upcoming special gubernatorial election — including the president of a national chain of discount cigarette stores who is running on a platform of "smoker's rights."

According to the list released by the California secretary of state on August 14, Ned Roscoe, Jack Hickey, and Ken Hamidi have qualified to appear on the October 7 ballot under the Libertarian Party banner.

Each one submitted signatures from at least 65 registered Libertarians, or paid a \$3,500 filing fee, or some combination of the two.



■ Libertarian Ned Roscoe will run on a platform of "smoker's rights" in California's gubernatorial recall election on October 7.

Crowded ballot

The Libertarian candidates will appear on a crowded ballot with 132 other contenders, including actor Arnold Schwarzenegger, State Senator Tom McClintock, former baseball commissioner Peter Ueberroth, columnist Arianna Huffington, businessman and former gubernatorial candidate Bill Simon, and lieutenant governor Cruz Bustamante.

Also running — although considered to be less serious — are sumo wrestler Kurt "Tachikaze" Rightmeyer, *Hustler* magazine publisher Larry Flynt, former child actor Gary

Coleman, Los Angeles billboard model Angelyne, and watermelon-smashing comedian Gallagher.

In all, 50 Democrats, 42 Republicans, and 32 independents qualified — as well as four Green Party, two Natural Law Party, one American Independent Party, and one Peace and Freedom Party candidates.

Another 112 would-be gubernatorial candidates filed to run, but failed to make the ballot because of insufficient signatures or incomplete paperwork.

The two-part ballot will allow California voters to first decide if they

wish to recall Democratic Governor Gray Davis, and then, if Davis is recalled, will allow them to select his replacement.

The Libertarian candidate with the potential to run the highest-visibility campaign appears to be Ned Roscoe, 42, the president of the Cigarettes Cheaper chain of stores.

Cigarettes Cheaper, which has been called the "nation's leading specialty retailer" of discount tobacco products, owns about 600 stores in 21 states. In 2001, the privately held company had estimated sales of about \$750 million.

Roscoe is the son of the company's CEO, John Roscoe. He has a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Chicago (1982).

Bagatorial book

Cigarettes Cheaper has attracted attention for the political messages — libertarian in nature — that it prints on its shopping bags. They were collected into a book entitled *Bagatorial* that Roscoe co-authored with Robert LeFevre.

In his campaign for governor, Roscoe said he will try to win votes from California's
See **RECALL**
Page 5



Harry Potter: The new *Atlas Shrugged*?

By Eryk Boston
SPECIAL TO LP NEWS

POP CULTURE Commentary

There is a pure joy in seeing libertarian principles expressed by unexpected sources in a world teeming with those who love power. This is especially true when the expression is focused on the next generation. Thus, I am almost rapturous about book five in the Harry Potter series, *The Order of the Phoenix*.

The first blessing of the Harry Potter series is that it is an example of a gifted writer making an obscene for-

tune by creating a product people love. It has recently been confirmed that J.K. Rowling is now wealthier than the World's Greatest Welfare Mother, the Queen of England. That alone is enough to warm my capitalist heart.

But far more important is that the first printing of *The Order of the Phoenix* will be 8.5 million copies. Subsequent printings could number in the

tens of millions. Millions of young kids, and many not-so-young kids, read these books repeatedly and absorb every detail. And this is one of the most anti-government books I've read since *Atlas Shrugged*.

No taxation

I'm not the first person to point out that the Harry Potter books have a libertarian flavor. The wizarding world in the series has a private banking system and no apparent zoning laws. Wizards have the right to carry

See **POTTER** Page 2

■ The hugely popular books about fledgling wizard Harry Potter have a pronounced "libertarian flavor."



NEWS BRIEFS

Gun rights conference set for Sept. 26-28

One of the nation's leading Second Amendment events — the 18th Annual Gun Rights Policy Conference — will be held in Houston, Texas on September 26-28.

The event, hosted by the Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) and the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms (CCRKBA), is an opportunity for gun rights supporters to plan strategy, said SAF Vice President Alan Gottlieb.

"We've got to work together to plan our victories in the battle to prevent the gun-grabbers from taking away our rights," he said.

The Gun Rights Policy Conference will feature speakers (still to be announced), seminars and panels, and free Second Amendment-related books and literature.

"The [conference] has historically been one of the yearly highlights of the gun rights movement," said Gottlieb. "[It] gives pro-gun activists the opportunity to mingle, share stories, listen to prominent speakers, and learn more about the right to keep and bear arms."

The Gun Rights Policy Conference will be held at the George Bush International Airport Marriott Hotel. There is no cost to attend.

To make reservations for the Gun Rights Policy Conference, visit: www.saf.org. Or call the SAF at: (425) 454-7012.

Maryland court strikes down ballot laws

The Court of Appeals in Maryland has struck down the state's "two-tier" ballot-access requirement for third parties — paving the way for the Maryland Libertarian Party to run more candidates in future elections.

"Libertarians believed that the voters in Maryland have been denied choices because of election laws," said Maryland LP State Chair Chip Spangler. "We are happy to see the court agrees, and applaud its decision in this case."

The court's decision, announced on July 29, had two major components:

- It struck down the state's requirement that third parties obtain 10,000 voter signatures for recognition as a party — and then submit a second petition for each candidate with the signatures of 1% of registered voters. That works out to about 27,000 additional signatures for a statewide race.

Instead, the court ruled that the original 10,000 signature requirement is enough to keep "frivolous" candidates off the ballot.

Steve Boone, the campaign manager for the Spear Lancaster for Governor campaign in 2002, said, "We agree with the court that the requirement for candidates of 'minor parties' to petition twice to appear on the ballot is a violation of equal protection. Different sets of standards should not be applied to different sets of candidates."

- It struck down a law that classified voters into two categories: Active and inactive. Maryland has about 2.7 million active registered voters and another 231,000 voters classified as "inactive." Signatures from inactive voters were not counted on ballot access petitions.

In 2002, the Libertarian Party became the first third party in 37 years to run a gubernatorial candidate in Maryland.

OnPower.org examines government power

The Independent Institute has created a new website — www.OnPower.org — that will examine the "nature, growth, and use of government power."

The site, which debuted on July 1, features an array of resources for both researchers and the general public, said David J. Theroux, the president of the Independent Institute.

"Although organized coercion by government has been studied for millennia, much confusion still exists about its causes and effects," he said. "What exactly is the nature of government power, and what are its effects on individual liberty, war and peace, the rule of law, and economic and social welfare? OnPower.org was created to help students, writers, policy-makers, scholars, and the general public arrive at better informed answers to these questions."

The site offers studies and commentary on such topics as civil liberties, corporate welfare, national defense and foreign policy, terrorism, the economy, and property rights.

OnPower.org also features quotations on power from more than 450 authors, scholars, and political leaders.

The site is designed to be a "one-stop Internet resource" on the topic of government power, said Theroux. "No issue is more central to the debate over public policy and more crucial to making peace, open markets, individual liberty, and the rule of law," he said.

OnPower.org is a project of the Oakland, California-based Independent Institute's Center on Peace & Liberty, which studies the link between war and the loss of freedom.



■ Steve Boone: Equal protection.

Is The Order of the Phoenix an Atlas Shrugged for 2003?

Continued from Page 1

a wand — more dangerous than any firearm — at all times for the express purpose of self-defense. The schools are largely independent (until this book). Dumbeldore, the most powerful wizard alive, actively avoids a position in government. Independent action is celebrated. Notably absent is any mention of a system of taxation.

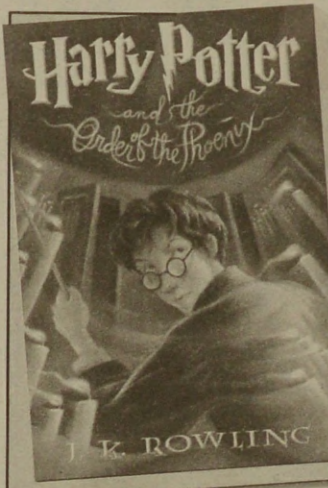
There is a formal government, but its purpose has been primarily to hide the wizarding world from muggles (i.e. you) and to control abuse of magic that could harm others. Until now, the high-ranking government ministers in the tales have generally been either pompous jerks or bumbling fools. With the exception of the time when the Minister of Magic knowingly put an innocent man in prison as a public-relations stunt, the authorities have almost been comic relief.

In this book, they cross the line into being dangerously corrupt. They deliberately conceal a mortal threat to the world. They engage in campaigns of character assassination against political enemies. By the end, the Minister's personal assistant resorts to the use of torture to retain power and reveals that she sent assassins to take out Harry Potter. The book is meticulous in detailing the wrong they do, the malice in their intent, and the harm they cause.

The true villain

While Lord Voldemort is the great evil of the series, Dolores Umbridge, the aforementioned government assistant, is the true villain of the book. She becomes the new Defense against the Dark Arts professor and institutes a government-approved curriculum — ostensibly intended to teach defense, but in reality designed to create helpless and dependent students. Her first class and her appalling "We raise our hands!" teaching method is enough to cause flashbacks in any victim of government schools.

She becomes a case study in power lust as she seizes control through the assumption of titles, rituals of obedience, censorship, personal enforce-



HARRY POTTER FACT FILE

- The idea for the Harry Potter series came to author J.K. Rowling while on a train in England. By the time she arrived in London, she had already conceived all the major characters and plotted out the seven books that will make up the series.

- Rowling started writing the first book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, while unemployed and on the dole. She wrote it in longhand because she couldn't afford a typewriter or computer.

- The first four Harry Potter books have sold about 192 million copies in 55 languages in 200 countries.

- Thanks to the Harry Potter books, Rowling is now richer than the Queen of England. According to the *Times of London*, Rowling is worth \$444 million, while the Queen must struggle to get by with just \$397 million.

- In the 2002 edition, J.K. Rowling joined Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud as an entry in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

ers, and the issuance of new decrees whenever her intentions are thwarted.

But the joy of the story is how the students and professors respond to this tyranny. The very title of the book refers to a private organization meant to fight Lord Voldemort, despite the cowardice of the state. I won't include any spoilers, but I can say that kids who read the book will get a fine lesson in civil disobedience, passive resistance, occasional active resistance, and the price of seeking power by state fiat.

Faced with classes designed to rob them of an education, the students organize to educate themselves in clear violation of the new decrees. State interference with the press is bypassed by utilizing an alternative method. The official effort to silence a news story results in the entire school reading it in one day.

Righteous resistance

And that is the key to Umbridge's downfall. As a fan of natural consequences, I found great delight in seeing her plans collapse under their own weight as soon as she got exactly what she wanted. This book will do much to instill in a generation of children an aversion to illegitimate state authority and an acceptance of righteous resistance.

As a bonus, decades of government school's efforts to make Americans illiterate could be destroyed overnight as millions of kids line up to buy an 870-page tome. Add all five books together, and they are longer than *War and Peace* by a wide margin. Plus, there are two more to come. While the books are widely enjoyed by children, neither the plot nor the vocabulary of the books can be said to be childish.

If you haven't already, read the books. Just get the first book and start reading. You'll soon have read all five, and find yourself happily spellbound in Harry's world — waiting eagerly for book six.

■ About the author: Libertarian Eryk Boston lives in Massachusetts.

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The Mission Statement of the Libertarian Party: "To move public policy in a libertarian direction by building a political party that elects Libertarians to public office."

Illinois Libertarians blast 'big lie' budget crisis

State party director, taxpayer advocate rip hidden spending

The Illinois Libertarian Party and the Illinois Taxpayer Education Foundation (ITEF) joined forces to blast the state government for a "house-of-cards" budget.

Illinois LP Executive Director Jeff Trigg and ITEF President Jim Tobin conducted a joint news conference in the Peoria Public Library on July 9 to expose a \$4 billion increase in the state's off-budget expenditures and \$1 billion in tax hikes.

"Springfield is running a massive shell game," charged Tobin. "Even as the state budget appears to be shrinking, spending has increased wildly. Hidden, off-budget spending has increased \$4 billion over the past year.

"To pay for these massive hidden spending hikes, Springfield is squeezing businesses and consumers with \$1 billion in tax hikes. High taxes are going to choke Illinois' economy and increase unemployment, unless Springfield exercises some restraint and common sense."

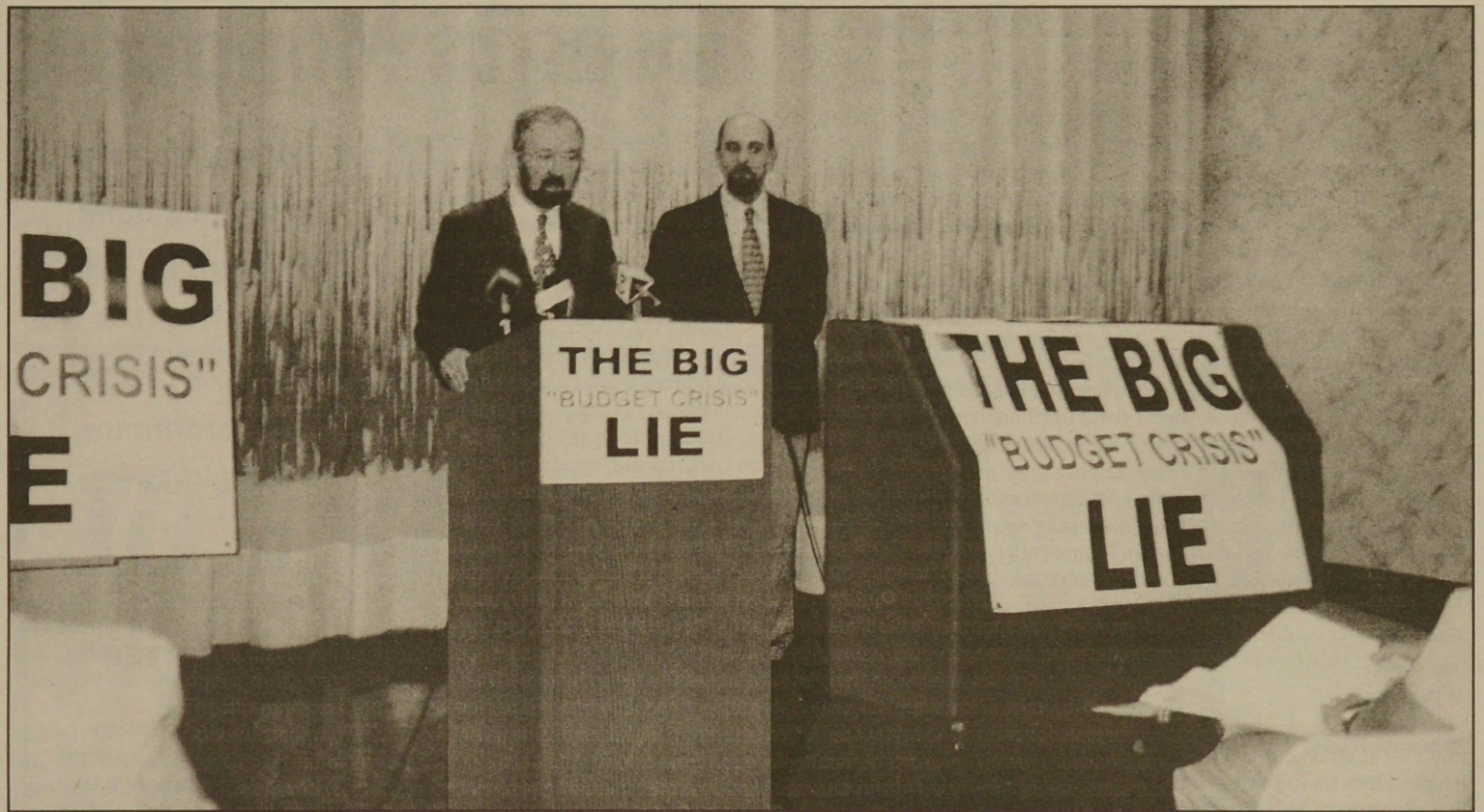
Off-budget spending

While the state budget technically fell from \$52.7 billion in Fiscal Year 2002 to \$52.6 billion in FY 2003, the budget "doesn't touch the problem of off-budget spending," said Tobin.

The \$4 billion in off-budget spending paid for lottery winnings, social services, salaries, and pensions, said Tobin.

"Like con men tricking old ladies out of their pension checks, the Springfield tax-grabbers have been running a shell game," he said.

According to the Illinois Comptrol-



■ Past LP gubernatorial candidate Jim Tobin (at podium) and LP Executive Director Jeff Trigg charge state politicians with running a "massive shell game." At a press conference at the Peoria Public

Library, Tobin charged that "even as the state budget appears to be shrinking, spending has increased wildly. Hidden, off-budget spending has increased \$4 billion over the past year."

ler, total state expenditures actually increased from about \$69 billion in 2002 to about \$74 billion in 2003.

Tobin also said the state government, despite its claims to be running a \$5 billion deficit, still has enough money for "pork projects."

For example, he noted, the budget includes \$7 million to restore the Lake Michigan shoreline in Chicago, \$30 million for the Argonne National Laboratory, and \$1 million to build a biomedical research facility at Northwestern University.

"Judging by their spending behavior, I'd say not even the politicians in Springfield really believe there's a crisis," he said.

In addition to his role with the ITEF and the National Taxpayers United of Illinois, Tobin was the 2002 LP candidate for Lt. Governor.

Trigg echoed Tobin's charges, noting that the state government was also raising fees to cover its growing off-budget expenses.

"Local governments all over Illinois are just now learning of fee in-

creases that Governor [Rod] Blagojevich and the General Assembly are using to prop up their house-of-cards budget," he said.

Passing the buck

"[Politicians] are effectively passing the buck to local governments to take the blame for higher taxes, while taking credit for not having to raise state income or sales taxes," he said.

New fees for solid waste management, water and sewer mains, and hazardous waste permits will cost

towns and cities at least \$56 million a year, said Trigg. The fee hikes were approved by the General Assembly on June 20.

The press conference generated statewide media coverage, and attracted journalists from at least two TV channels, three radio stations, and two newspapers.

The Illinois Taxpayer Education Foundation (ITEF) is a non-profit, organization that researches and publicizes taxation and government spending issues.

Michigan judge dismisses local LP's slander lawsuit

A Michigan judge has dismissed a defamation lawsuit filed by the Oakland County LP against a Republican candidate who claimed Libertarians say "it's okay to do drugs."

While the judge seemed to acknowledge that the statement was untruthful, he dismissed the suit on the grounds that it was "non-actionable political hyperbole" protected by the First Amendment.

On July 17, Troy District Judge Michael Martone granted a summary disposition against the lawsuit, which had been filed against Troy city council candidate Cristina Pappageorge. A summary disposition means the judge didn't think there was enough evidence to take the suit to trial.

However, Oakland County Libertarians said they were satisfied by the ruling.

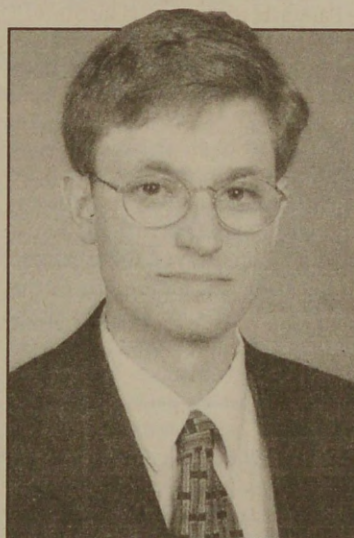
"In one sense, we got exactly what we wanted — a public declaration that Mrs. Pappageorge lied," said Oakland County LP Chair Nathan Allen. "The judge concluded that lies are protected political speech under the First Amendment."

The Oakland County LP filed the slander suit against Pappageorge on February 26, after the Republican had attacked Libertarian Troy city council candidate Martin Howrylak two weeks earlier at a televised debate.

Issues were smokescreen

In the debate, Pappageorge charged that the local issues raised by incumbent Howrylak were a "smokescreen," and that Howrylak's re-election would encourage children to use marijuana.

She stated: "Mr. Howrylak is a city official; Mr. Howrylak is a Libertar-



■ Martin Howrylak: The Oakland County LP charged that he was slandered by a Republican rival.

ian; Libertarians say it's okay to do drugs."

The attack didn't help Pappageorge: Howrylak was the top vote-getter in the April 7 election, easily winning his re-election bid. Pappageorge came in third and was not elected.

See **SLANDER** Page 7

Reformatted Platform website is now online

Thanks to a new website, LP members can now view and comment on the "reformatting" project that may change the face of the Libertarian Party's Platform.

The website — located at www.aznorthandalliance.org/LNCplatform — has rewritten versions of more than half of the Platform's 61 planks, and has a feedback mechanism so party members can make suggestions, said George Squyres, a member of the LP Platform Special Committee.

"The website was created so the reformatting of the Platform would be available to the membership as a whole, so that membership input and feedback could be incorporated into the process," he said.

"People who care about the Platform — and want to understand the reformatting process or want to con-

"PEOPLE WHO CARE about the Platform can view the process, see the results we are producing, and participate in it."
—George Squyres

tribute to it — can view the ongoing process, see the results we are producing, and participate in it."

The project is part of the Libertarian Party's Strategic Plan, adopted by the Libertarian National Committee. See **WEBSITE** Page 14

POLITICAL NEWS

The 'L' word crops up in unusual contexts

The "L-word" has been cropping up in the news in a number of unexpected venues recently.

In Maryland, for example, Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley is under the impression that President Bush is a "libertarian."

In an August news conference, O'Malley blasted the "libertarian president" for "treating Baltimore and other major cities very shabbily." Bush isn't really a Republican, opined O'Malley, because Republicans stand for "fiscal responsibility."

In the online version of the *Weekly Standard* (August 8), reporter Katherine Mangu-Ward notes that Democratic presidential candidate Dennis Kucinich claims to be drawing support from libertarians.

But, she commented, "libertarians are markedly less enthusiastic. And it's hardly surprising that organizations like the Libertarian Party aren't eager to back a man who is devoted to universal health care, universal day care, and a cabinet-level Department of Peace."

In a speech at New York University on August 7, former vice president Al Gore managed to work "Libertarian" and "Mugwump" into the same sentence. Gore said all Americans "whether you're a Democrat or a Republican — or an Independent, a Libertarian, a Green or a Mugwump," have a role to play in a representative democracy.

No, a Mugwump isn't a character from *Harry Potter*. Originally a label for a renegade Republican who refused to support the party's presidential candidate in 1884, it has broadened to mean a political independent, or someone who can't make up his mind about issues.

Is Georgia e-vote system ripe for fraud?

A new touchscreen voting system used statewide since 2002 should be scrapped because of its enormous potential for fraud and abuse, the Georgia LP says.

"As a 28-year veteran computer engineer, I knew these new voting machines would be vulnerable to vote tampering, but it just floored me when I found out how terribly vulnerable they really are," said Georgia LP State Chair Dr. Helmut Forren on July 10.

His comments came after a New Zealand-based website — www.scoop.co.nz — alleged that Diebold voting machines can be manipulated to change the outcome of an election. The machines use a computerized voting system that produces no paper ballots.

According to the website, the software that runs the Diebold machines has been available on an unsecured website, and the electronic "audit trail" that records changes to software or vote totals can be doctored to hide any evidence of tampering.

"[This] shocking report puts Georgia in the spotlight for potential vote-counting fraud," said Forren. "This report shows that the system for vote counting is completely insecure."

The Georgia LP has set up an online petition at www.404-Freedom.com to allow state voters to demand a more secure and trustworthy voting system, said Forren.

"We are calling on the Georgia legislature to do the right thing and scrap this fraud-prone system now," he said. "This system cannot stay in place if Georgians are ever to trust that their votes really count."

Medical pot amendment fails in U.S. House

An amendment that would have protected medical marijuana patients from prosecution by federal agencies didn't pass in the U.S. House — but it did surprisingly well, say supporters.

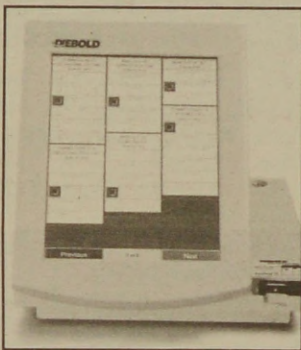
The amendment to the Commerce-Justice-State Department Appropriations bill failed on a 152-273 vote on July 23. However, that was a much more promising result than a 1998 resolution opposing state medical marijuana laws, which passed on a 311-98 vote.

"The vote is clearly moving in our favor," Bruce Mirken of the Marijuana Policy Project told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "[Politicians are starting to realize] that this is an issue of compassion."

The measure was introduced by U.S. Reps. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA). It was supported by Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX).

Had it passed, the amendment would have prohibited the Justice Department — including the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) — from spending money to arrest medical marijuana patients and providers, or to otherwise interfere with states' medical marijuana laws.

California voters legalized medical marijuana in 1996. However, the federal DEA has continued to raid medical marijuana distribution centers and arrest cancer, AIDS, and multiple sclerosis patients who use the drug on the advice of a physician. Currently, eight states allow the cultivation and use of marijuana for medicinal purposes.



LP grocery tax repeal effort loses in Montrose, Colorado

It turns out that residents of Montrose, Colorado don't want to reduce their own taxes.

On July 15, voters rejected by a surprisingly large margin a measure sponsored by the Western Slope Libertarian Party that would have repealed the town's grocery tax.

When all the ballots were counted, 2,842 votes were cast against the measure (71.9%), while 1,109 residents voted in favor of it (28.1%).

A record-breaking 67% of the town's 5,866 registered voters participated in the referendum.

The special election ballot asked voters whether they wished to repeal a 3% tax on food purchased for home consumption. A "yes" vote would have saved taxpayers about \$2.3 million annually, and reduced city revenue by about 17%.

Jo-Jo Ping, past chair of the Western Slope LP, said she thought the tax-cut measure failed because city politicians told voters that public services would be slashed if it passed.

Frighten voters

"I believe the city has done everything they can to frighten or coerce the voters not to pass this ordinance," she told the *Daily Sentinel*.

Before the election, local politicians and tax supporters said the grocery tax cut would "cripple government," and charged that the repeal effort was sponsored by "people who don't like government."

"I BELIEVE THE city has done everything they can to frighten the voters not to pass this ordinance."

—Jo-Jo Ping

The measure was opposed by the Montrose Chamber of Commerce's board of directors, the Montrose Economic Development Corporation, and the Committee to Protect Our Quality of Life.

Western Slope LP Chair Mike Humbert said he was proud that Libertarians tried to repeal the tax, even if the effort fell short.

"It is just plain wrong to tax grocery food items, so we did our best to change it," he said.

"When I moved here about three years ago from Denver, I was appalled to find out the city was taxing food items at the grocery store. I had never heard of such a practice and had always assumed that essentials of life were never taxed anywhere."

During the repeal campaign, Libertarians said the grocery tax was immoral because it placed an unfair

burden on the poor and elderly.

"To me, [the vote] came down to: Do you care about your neighbor or do you care about yourself? This issue brought that to the forefront, and that's why we said it's a moral issue," Humbert told the *Daily Sentinel*.

Had it passed, the initiative would have eliminated the tax on food purchased for home consumption — including staples such as bread, milk, vegetables, and meat — but would not have changed the tax status of packaged food or meals purchased in restaurants.

Norm Olsen, the State Chair of the Colorado LP, said the Montrose tax fight was inspiring, despite the loss.

Fight city hall

"It's been said that you can't fight city hall," he said. "Mike Humbert and his fellow Libertarians in Montrose are proving this all wrong. What the Western Slope Libertarian Party has done makes me proud to be a Libertarian."

Western Slope Libertarians had collected more than 500 signatures from registered voters to put the tax repeal initiative on the ballot.

During the campaign to pass the measure, Libertarians had argued that the city government did not need the revenue from the grocery tax.

"The city of Montrose claims it needs the money, but Libertarians say citizens on fixed incomes need the money more," he said at the time.

Ron Crickenberger ends 6-year tenure as political director in Washington, DC

As part of an ongoing effort to cut costs, Ron Crickenberger has been laid off from his position as LP political director at the party's Washington, DC headquarters.

Crickenberger had served as the party's first full-time political director from 1997-2003, except from September 1997-September 1998, when he was the party's national director. His last day was July 15.

LP National Chair Geoffrey Neale said the layoff was necessary because of the dramatic reduction in contributions the party has been suffering from since late 2001.

"The LNC [Libertarian National Committee, Inc.] felt that it had to pursue further overhead reductions in order to guarantee the financial health of the organization," he said.

At its June 28-29 meeting in Seattle, the LNC had passed a motion directing Neale to work with Executive Director Joe Seehusen to reduce the salary costs of employees to meet the LP's "core" budget.

Neale said he appreciated the good

work Crickenberger had done as a party employee.

"Ron has been a tireless worker for liberty over the years," he said. "I have great respect for him as a dedicated activist, and know that he will continue to work for liberty in whatever venue he seeks."

Neale also said the party may try to hire Crickenberger on a contracting basis to work on specific projects in the future, if finances permit.

For his part, Crickenberger said he had enjoyed his tenure as political director.

"It was a great six years," he said. "During the years I was political director, we ran more candidates every year, and the number of Libertarians in office increased every single year."



■ Ron Crickenberger: He 'was the conductor.'

Even during the last couple of years of falling membership and funds, we still managed to run more candidates and elect more Libertarians than ever.

"But I was just the conductor. It was the hard-working candidates of the LP who played the symphony. Thanks to them all for helping me to do the hard work of freedom."

Still deciding

Crickenberger said he is still deciding what he will do next.

"I have already received offers from a number of libertarian organizations to do work for them," he said. "And I have several projects of my own to pursue."

During Crickenberger's tenure as political director, the number of elected Libertarians more than tripled, from 180 to over 600.

In 2000, Crickenberger ran for U.S. House (8th District) in Virginia. That same year, he was named a "Rising Star of Politics" by *Campaigns and Elections* magazine — a first for any third party.

Three Libertarians on recall ballot

Continued from Page 1
4 million smokers.

"I want to be a candidate for governor so that smokers will get more power," he told the *Fairfield Daily Republic*. "And if I can get just half of them to vote for a smokers' candidate, that might be enough to win."

According to Roscoe's campaign literature, "About 20% of California adults smoke cigarettes. That means 4,000,000 Californians over the age of 18 smoke cigarettes. If half of those people vote, and if half of those voters vote with us, that's enough votes to carry the election."

Even if he doesn't actually win, Roscoe said that if he earns enough votes, he will "send a powerful message to the lawmakers."

"I believe we have three ways to win in this," Roscoe told the *Palm Beach Desert Sun*. "The first is to get the most votes and become governor. The second is to get someone else to adopt the platform. And the third is to demonstrate enough political power for smokers that the politicians start to treat them with respect."

The campaign will be broader than just smoking rights, said Roscoe. According to his campaign literature, it will also focus on:

■ **"No New Taxes!** The state has plenty of ways to take money from the people. Current [tax] rates are too high."

■ **"No New Stupid Laws!** California enacts more than a thousand new laws every year. There are more laws already than anyone can obey. Politicians spend too much time trying to design the perfect California."

■ **"Get the Work Done!** You've heard people say, 'That's OK for government work.' Citizens pay a lot for government — and should be well served."

Roscoe said he will use Cigarettes Cheaper stores as his campaign headquarters, and expects to spend only \$5,000 to \$10,000 on his campaign. Instead, he will rely on media attention, word-of-mouth, and proselytizing in the Cigarettes Cheaper stores, he said.

Since the average customer spends about 45 seconds making a purchase, that will mean plenty of time for him and campaign volunteers to ask for votes, he said.

Roscoe has already hit the campaign trail, with stops in Palm Desert and Porterville in mid-August.

The campaign will not accept contributions, said Roscoe.

Unusual move

In an unusual move, Cigarettes Cheaper vice president Jeremy Chapman had planned to run for governor as a Democrat, and run on the same "smoker's rights" platform as Roscoe.

However, Chapman had not registered as a Democrat at least three months before the election as required by state law, and was disqualified from running.

Chapman and Roscoe had planned to run under the informal umbrella of the "Smoker's Party," which is not

a recognized party in the state.

Roscoe has past experience in politics: In 1998, he led the campaign against Proposition 10, which was passed by voters and imposed a 50-cent tax on every pack of cigarettes.

In 2000, he backed Proposition 28, an initiative to repeal the new cigarette tax. The California LP endorsed the proposition, and then-State Chair Mark Hinkle said, "We congratulate

Ned Roscoe for leading this effort and we look forward to a campaign to repeal a tax that should never have passed in the first place."

However, Proposition 28 was rejected by California residents, winning only 28% of the vote — about 1.3 million votes.

For campaign information, visit: www.smokersparty.com.

Also on the gubernatorial ballot

will be Libertarian Jack Hickey, 69, a retired research scientist and Navy veteran from Redwood City who serves on the Sequoia Healthcare District board. He was elected to that post in November 2002.

Dissolve district boards

If elected governor, Hickey said he would abolish "unnecessary agencies" and dissolve special district boards, including the healthcare district board he sits on.

He also said he would offer property-tax credits to pay for educational

expenses, and said he supports the death penalty and opposes abortion.

Hickey had previously run for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District board.

The third Libertarian candidate is Ken Hamidi, 51. His website says, "Due to the short filing notice, Hamidi is registered Libertarian but considers himself Independent."

In addition, six other Libertarians took out papers to run for governor, but did not file the paperwork or were rejected by the secretary of state, and will not appear on the ballot.

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— Richard Lundquist

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TALKING POINTS

Regulating kids' video games, and a lemonade stand lesson

■ Spurious sprawl

Data newly available from the 2000 Census show that at least 94.6% of the United States is rural open space — calling into question one of the most common arguments made in defense of smart growth and compact urban development: that we are “running out” of open space.

More than two out of three Americans live in urbanized areas. These areas collectively cover 2% of the nation's land area.

Counting urbanized areas and urban clusters together, nearly four out of five Americans live in an urban setting. Urbanized areas and urban clusters cover 2.6% of the nation's land.

Together, urbanized areas, urban clusters, and [low-population] rural places occupy 5.4% of the nation's land, while urban areas alone cover just 2.6%. Rural open space thus covers between 94.6% and 97.4% of the land in the United States.

— RANDAL O'TOOLE

Environment & Climate News
July 2003

■ OSHA for criminals

Gun control laws are like OSHA for criminals. When criminals have guns and their victims don't, crime becomes a safer occupation.

— THOMAS SOWELL

TownHall.com, July 27, 2003

■ 30-day occupation

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told a [Congressional] hearing that the “burn rate” for American money to fund the military presence in Iraq was now \$3.9 billion a month — almost \$1 billion a week.

But that billion a week is just the beginning. It doesn't include the cost of running Iraq's government and rebuilding it, which could be an additional billion a month, according to rough U.N. estimates.

How will the reconstruction be funded? For the administration it's an especially painful question, because it comes at a time when the U.S. economy is in the doldrums [and] budget deficits are ballooning.

Why did the administration rush into this war so ill prepared for what would come after?

Supposedly there was a clear and present danger from Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, but even if it was present, clearly it wasn't imminent. No such weapons were used and none have been found.

While administration hawks were pushing hard for war, however, they airily dismissed questions about the long-term cost of occupying post-Saddam Iraq. An occupation might

not have to last more than “30 to 60 days,” [predicted one] State Department official.

— CHRISTOPHER DICKEY

Newsweek, July 21, 2003

■ Give them ours

The United States is putting together a Constitution now for Iraq. Why don't we just give them ours? It's served us well for 200 years, and we don't appear to be using it anymore, so what the hell?

— JAY LENO

The Tonight Show
August 5, 2003

■ Umpteen laws

This local story quickly went national. Little six-year-old girl has a lemonade stand out in Naples, Florida. Neighbor turns in the kid for operating a “temporary commercial business” without a license. Cops say, “Normally we don't get involved in it but once we receive a formal complaint we have to take action.”

Oh brother.

Folks, if this kind of thing goes on, what it means, basically, is that anyone who wants to harass anyone else need merely find some ordinance that the person being harassed has possibly violated.

Then phone in a tip to cops or bureaucrats, who will feel they “have to act.” Since there are umpteen laws on the books, many of which contradict each other, shouldn't be too hard for all of us to turn each other in.

— PAUL JACOB

Common Sense, July 24, 2003

■ Kiddie porn

Parents of students at Livingston Middle School in Overton County, Tennessee, want to know why the school had a security camera in the school's locker room that photographed the children changing clothes.

They also want to know why those images were stored on a computer that anyone apparently could access from the Internet. So they are suing to find out.

A lawyer from the school refused to comment.

— CHARLES OLIVER

Reason Online, August 6, 2003

■ The neocon threat

The rise of neoconservatism on the right [is a danger to American liberty]. The movement is using the threat of terrorism to expand government at home and abroad.

Underlying neoconservatism is a desire to reshape America and the world through the efforts of a robust federal government. For years, the *Weekly Standard*, the neoconservative magazine, has promoted the need for

THE PROBLEM WITH regulating video games is that there's “little evidence of a link between video games and aggressive youth.”

initiatives to reinforce America's international power. Merely living in a free society appears to be insufficient for neoconservatives.

During George W. Bush's campaign for president, the neoconservative influence was felt in domestic policy ideas such as faith-based initiatives that would involve the federal government in private local charities, often with a religious orientation.

It was also seen in the call for a greater federal role in local education. These are both inconsistent with the concept of limited government and federalism.

Some in the neoconservative movement have openly called for an American empire around the globe. Max Boot, the writer, recently praised what he termed America's “imperialism” and said it should impose its views “at gunpoint.”

James Woolsey, the former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has called for a decades-long campaign to re-order the entire Middle East along neoconservative lines. Such thinking is profoundly un-American.

— ED CRANE & WILLIAM NISKANEN

The Financial Times
June 24, 2003

■ Enthusiastic advocate

President Bush is an enthusiastic advocate of big government. Over the last three years, federal spending increased 2.5 times faster than national income.

— DOUG BANDOW

TownHall.com July 31, 2003

■ Healthcare lies

The nature of a lie is such that if you repeat it often enough it takes on a life of its own. So it is with lies spoken in defense of single-payer health care. Consider:

Lie #1: Single-payer systems are “free” for individuals. Single-payer health care plans are not free: They are paid for by tax dollars. Billions of them. Canadians pay extraordinarily high income taxes for their “free” care ...only to have to pay again when



■ Soda pop scandal

Hardly a week goes by without one of the local newspapers printing a letter from some reader ranting that the big oil companies are “price gouging” consumers. It never fails: Gasoline hits two bucks a gallon and here comes the outrage.

Are big oil companies in fact earning unreasonable profits?

ExxonMobil's return on equity for the last four years (1999 through 2002) was 12.4%, 25%, 21%, and 15% respectively. For the same four years Coca Cola's return on equity was 25.5%, 23.3%, 34.9%, and 25.8%.

By that measure, perhaps it's the drinkers of soda pop who should be writing the letters to the editor.

— DOUG FRENCH

Environment & Climate News
July 2003

■ Regulating games

[Consider] the debate over “violent” video game regulation. Some legislators are claiming [such games] must be regulated by government to protect minors from ill effects.

For example, Rep. Joe Baca (D-Calif.) recently introduced H.R. 669, “The Protect Children from Video Game Sex and Violence Act of 2003.” This bill would impose fines on anyone who sells or rents, “any video game that depicts nudity, sexual conduct, or other content harmful to minors.”

There are many problems with such measures. To start, there's little evidence of a link between video games and aggressive youth.

While the video game industry was exploding between 1994 and 2000, juvenile (ages 15-17) violent crime arrests dropped by 44% and young adult (ages 18-24) violent crime arrests dropped by 24%, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

While that does not necessarily rule out any relationship between video games and youth violence, it should make policymakers pause before rushing to legislate.

— ADAM THIERER

The Cato Institute, July 14, 2003

they come to the United States for care they can't get in Canada.

Lie #2: Single-payer systems offer timely care. One million people in Britain are on a waiting list for inpatient hospital admission at any given time. For 250,000 of them, it takes more than 26 weeks to be admitted for care.

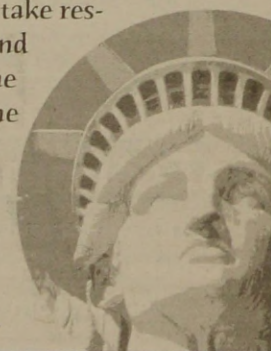
— CONRAD F. MEIER

Health Care News, July 2003

**“What is freedom?
It is the will to be
responsible to ourselves.”**

—FRIEDRICH W. NIETZSCHE

Libertarians understand that with freedom, comes responsibility. That's why we're willing to take responsibility for our lives, our families, our actions, and our health. We're also willing to take responsibility for our political party — and step up to do what it takes to make the Libertarian Party a success. Here's one easy way to do that: By naming the LP in your will or insurance policy. For a confidential discussion of this option, call National LP Treasurer Bill Redpath at (703) 802-2978. Or e-mail him at: wredpath@his.com.



Michigan judge dismisses slander suit filed by local LP

Continued from Page 3

Oakland County LP Communications Director Greg Dirasian said the party filed the lawsuit because Pappageorge's statement was clearly and demonstrably false.

"Ms. Pappageorge has shown reckless disregard for the truth, and we take this matter seriously," he said at the time.

Howrylak was not a plaintiff in the lawsuit, which had asked for \$10,000 in damages. Instead, the lawsuit had been filed "on behalf of Libertarians everywhere," said Dirasian.

"We are law-abiding people who seek change through the political process," he said. "And frankly, we've had enough of being slandered. We will no longer permit these derogatory allegations to go unchallenged."

In a motion filed with the court, Pappageorge had asked the judge to dismiss the suit on five different grounds. She claimed:

- Her statement was truthful.
- Even if false, the statement was protected by the First Amendment.
- The Oakland County LP did not have standing to file the suit, since the statement was directed against Howrylak in a non-partisan election.
- The statement was not made with malice (a necessary ingredient for slander).
- The statement did not harm the Oakland County LP.

Leonard Schwartz, an attorney in the suit and an Oakland County LP member, said the judge agreed with Pappageorge only on the First Amendment issue.

"He ruled that her false remarks were nonactionable political hyperbole protected by the First Amendment," he said.

By not dismissing the suit on the grounds that Pappageorge's statement was truthful, the judge strongly implied that her remarks were, in fact, a lie, said Dirasian.

Statement was untrue

"Judge Martone ruled that Cristina Pappageorge's statement regarding the Libertarian Party's stance on the War on Drugs was untrue — affirming what Libertarians had been claiming since she made the statement," he said.

With the ruling that even lies are protected political speech, Allen said voters need to be cautious about what politicians say.

"Now more than ever, voters need to investigate everything a candidate says and take nothing at face value," he said. "No wonder so many voters are turned off by politics and don't even bother going to the polls."

Michigan Libertarian campaign consultant Barbara Goushaw said the decision showed how difficult it can be to win a political slander suit.

"It's one thing to accuse a politician of lying. It's quite another to prove it in court," she said.

"For my part, I will continue to advise Libertarian candidates to stick to the issues. The vast majority of voters share our positions on the is-

**"It's ONE THING
to accuse a
politician of lying.
It's quite another to
prove it in court."
—Barbara Goushaw**

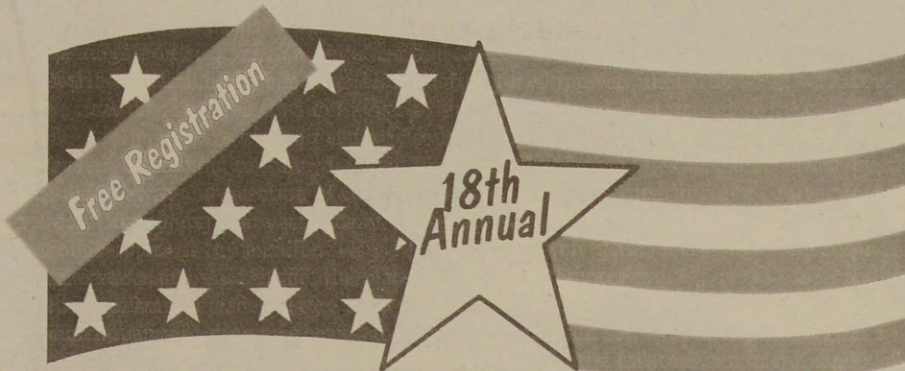
sues: fiscal responsibility and smaller, less intrusive government," she said. "So when our opposition cannot compete with us on the issues, they resort to outrageous lies and personal attacks."

Does not mean...

The national Libertarian Party's platform calls for the repeal of drug laws, but notes: "Our support of an

individual's right to make choices in life does not mean that we necessarily approve or disapprove of those choices."

Libertarians have traditionally argued that the War on Drugs creates black markets that enrich criminals, diverts police resources from violent crimes like rape and murder, and fosters laws that violate Americans' civil liberties.



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The full roster of GRPC 2003 speakers has not yet been set. Past speakers have included: Alan M. Gottlieb, Joseph P. Tartaro, Wayne LaPierre, G. Gordon Liddy, Ken Hamblin, Massad Ayoob, Tom Gresham, Sens. Bob Smith, Larry Craig and Ben Nighthorse Campbell along with Reps. Bob Barr and Chris Cannon and many others. Check our web sites -- www.saf.org or www.ccrkba.org for updates.

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AFFILIATE NEWS

Nonviolent prisoner release gets thumbs-up, while USA/Patriot Act draws blast from party

■ ARIZONA

State Libertarians will oppose light-rail plan

The Arizona LP says it opposes two initiatives that would require Tucson to build a light-rail system and fund it with higher taxes.

Members of Citizens for a Sensible Transportation Solution delivered 14,000 signatures to the Tucson City Hall on July 28 to qualify the initiatives for the November ballot.

If approved by voters, the first proposal would require the city government to build a light-rail train system, increase bus services in the metro area, improve road maintenance efforts, and build bike paths.

The second initiative would increase city sales taxes from 7.6% to 7.9% and impose a construction tax of 4% to pay for those projects. The tax hikes could cost residents up to \$800 million over two decades.

However, the state LP said the plan is a waste of money, and would not accomplish its goals.

The project would not relieve traffic congestion and would "serve only a small fraction of Tucson's commuters," Arizona LP State Chair **Jason Auvenshine** told the *Tucson Citizen*.

■ FLORIDA

Brevard County LP urges 'no' vote on tax proposal

The Brevard County LP is encouraging residents to vote against a proposed tax increase — calling it a "fix for an out-of-control" county government.

On July 22, the Brevard County Commission decided to put a tax-hike referendum on the November 4 ballot. Voters will now decide whether to boost the county sales tax to 7% (up from 6%), at a cost of about \$1.3 billion over 20 years.

The additional money will pay for a \$1.6 million cultural arts center, road improvements, and school construction.

However, at a public hearing before the county commission, Brevard County LP Chair **Bruce Wechsler** said the tax hike was only being considered because of the commission's irresponsible spending.

"To give you access to this additional 1% sales tax would almost be like giving the next fix to an out-of-control junkie," he said. "The difference being that the junkie would probably do harm only to himself, and your harm would encroach on all of us."

Any tax increase would hurt the most economically vulnerable members of the community, said Wechsler. "Who is hit hardest and most di-



Photo by John Paff

New Jersey Libertarians relax at annual summer picnic

■ Members of the New Jersey LP relax at the party's annual general meeting and picnic on July 5. The event, held at the home of New Jersey LP Vice Chair **Len Flynn** in Morganville, attracted about 25 people.

"Mainly, it's a relaxed, fun time where Libertarians enjoy food, drink, sports, and each other's company," said local LP activist **John Paff**. "I always have a blast and I think most people do."

However, Libertarians also conducted some business at the meeting, he said. At the meeting, attendees "passed a few resolutions, and the party leadership brought the membership up-to-date on candidates, costs for operations, etc."

The party also passed a resolution recognizing December 5, 2003 as the 70th anniversary of the date when enough states ratified the Constitutional amendment to repeal alcohol prohibition.

rectly by a sales tax?" he asked. "It is those least able to afford it — the working class and [the] small business owner."

■ INDIANA

State high court rules against LP in sign case

The Indiana Supreme Court has ruled that all campaign signs must list the name of the person who paid for them — dealing a setback to an LP candidate.

On July 24, the court ruled that the term "persons" in state law includes everyone, not just political parties or campaign committees.

The decision marked a defeat for **Brian Majors**, a Libertarian candidate for Vanderburgh County assessor. In 1998, Majors had posted handmade signs touting his campaign. The Vanderburgh County clerk notified Majors that he had violated state law by not stating on the signs who paid for them. He faced a year in jail and a \$5,000 fine.

In response, Majors sued the state, arguing that the law infringed on his free speech rights.

Although his case was dismissed in 2002, the Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals later agreed to decide the issue, and asked the Indiana Supreme Court to clarify the meaning of "persons."

In its opinion, the court ruled that "persons" included "any individual or organization." The justices said the law requiring campaign materials to be identified was needed to protect voters from last-minute, anonymous attack ads.

■ NEW YORK

Cyber-petition seeks to reform air traffic control

George W. Bush is right about this one.

That's what New York Libertarian **Richard Cooper** says about the president's recent executive order, which could help privatize the air traffic control system. And that's why he has set up an online petition to support the action.

"What's at stake here is not merely the possibility of outsourcing a few more control towers," said Cooper, Chair of the Nassau County LP. "This

is really about whether or not the government will be able to convert air traffic control into a high-tech, user-friendly business service, rather than continuing as a cumbersome, tax-funded bureaucracy."

On June 6, Bush issued Executive Order 13180. It removed the words "inherently a governmental function" from President Bill Clinton's December 2000 executive order which directed the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to transform air traffic control into a "performance-based" operation. The Clinton language restricted the FAA from exploring full privatization.

However, both houses of Congress have passed legislation to overturn Bush's executive order — which is why privatization advocates need to be heard, said Cooper.

"We Libertarians reject the myth that air traffic control is inherently a governmental function," he said. "Therefore, we urge President Bush to veto this legislation that would hamper air traffic control reform."

To sign the petition, visit: www.petitiononline.com/airveto3/petition.html.

■ OHIO

LP scolds State Senate for 'warping' gun bill

The Ohio LP has chastised the State Senate for gutting a bill that would grant state citizens the right to carry concealed weapons.

"The Ohio Senate thwarted [an] attempt to return the right of self defense to Ohio citizens by warping HB12 into an unacceptable piece of legislation," charged Ohio LP State Chair **Jason Hallmark** on June 25.

Under a version of HB12 passed by the State House in March, sheriffs would be required to issue gun permits to state residents who pass criminal background checks and complete a firearms training course.

However, on June 18, the State Senate passed a radically different version of the bill that added a fingerprinting requirement, added a \$45 fee, and eliminated an "affirmative defense" provision.

"Fingerprinting equates law-abiding citizens to sex offenders when simply trying to protect themselves," said Hallmark.

While the legislature has recessed for the summer without taking final action on HB12, the bill is still technically alive until December 31, 2004, when the General Assembly ends.

■ OREGON

LP: Don't 'reform' taxes as a ploy to raise them

A public hearing about how to "reform" the state tax system was really a ploy to figure out how to raise taxes, the state LP has charged.

The hearing, held by the Oregon House Revenue Committee in Salem on July 7, drew more than 60 people — including Oregon LP Executive Director **Richard Burke**.

But while some participants urged politicians to impose a state sales tax or close "loopholes" in the income tax, Burke said the solution to the state's fiscal woes is not more taxes.

"The answer from state government always seems to be the same: More spending, higher taxes, and more spending," he said. Such actions

Online Resources for LP Members

■ Find contact info for your state Libertarian Party or your State Chair
Visit: www.LP.org
Click on: Organization
Click on: State Parties
Click on: [Your state]

■ Find contact info for the National Committee
Visit: www.LP.org
Click on: Organization
Click on: National Committee
Click on: LNC Directory

■ Renew your membership
Visit: www.LP.org
See: Special Features (left side)
Click on: Renew

have created a "crisis of confidence in Oregon between the people and their government."

That's why politicians pretended to listen to options, but were really plotting how to raise taxes, said Burke. "The sole objective of these hearings can only be to determine how to restructure the tax burden to generate more taxes in the least painful way," he said.

The House Revenue Committee said the purpose of the hearing was not to consider any specific legislation, but said it could serve as a prelude to a possible 2004 sales tax ballot measure.

■ TENNESSEE

September is declared 'Youth Month' for party

September has been declared "Youth Month" for the Hamilton County LP.

During that month, county Libertarians will work to publicize the LP and register Libertarian voters at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, said **Trevor M. Southerland**, who is coordinating the project.

"The purpose of this month is to spread the word of the Libertarian Party to college students and high school students who will soon be entering colleges," he said. "We all know that the children are the future."

"Another major goal is to register the college students to vote; we can be a major force if [college students] all vote. By just letting the students know what the Libertarian Party is about, we have helped our cause."

Southerland, who is head of the University of Tennessee (Chattanooga) Campus Libertarians and on the Steering Committee for the Tennessee LP, said every LP organization should focus more on attracting young people.

"I would encourage all of you to speak with your local or state LP Chairmen to organize a Libertarian Youth Month in your area," he said.

■ TEXAS

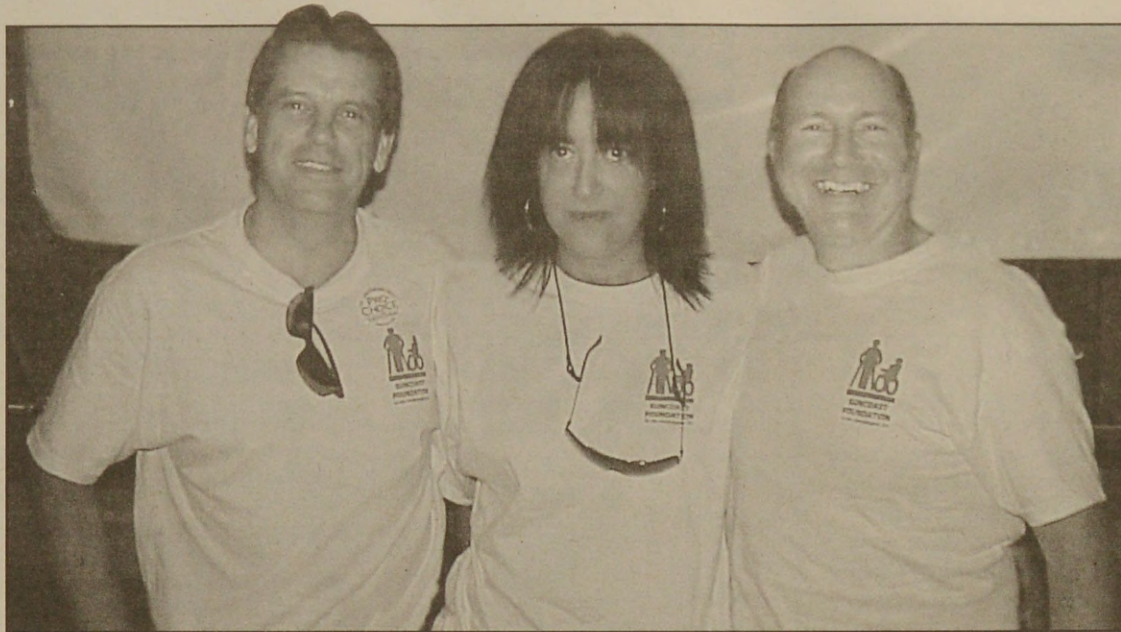
Travis Co. LP celebrates July 4 with Declaration

The Travis County LP celebrated the 4th of July the old-fashioned way — by handing out copies of the Declaration of Independence.

A team of five Libertarians distributed more than 1,200 copies of the nation's founding document to attendees at the Austin Symphony performance and fireworks show at Zilker Park, Austin.

"The fliers were a big hit with the crowd," said **Bob Ruliffson**, who organized the outreach effort. "The response was very enthusiastic, with most people expressing gratitude and interest. Many people pursued me, seeking additional copies."

The two-sided flier featured a color copy of the Declaration of In-



Libertarians help out with Suncoast Offshore charity event in Florida

■ Members of the Sarasota Libertarian Party (Florida) take a break "after a hard day of volunteering" for a local charity.

Shown here (l-r): Sarasota LP Chair **Bill Van Allen**, Secretary **Shelley Namer**, and Vice-Chair **Jim Theriault**. The three helped out with the annual Suncoast Offshore event — described as the "World's Largest Offshore Party" — which was held at the Hyatt Sarasota Hotel on July 3.

The event, sponsored by the Suncoast Foundation for the Handicapped, Inc. (a 501c3 non-profit organization), raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for disabled children.

dependence, printed on glossy paper. Printed below: "This copy of the Declaration of Independence is provided as a public service by the Travis County Libertarian Party," with the party's website and phone number.

How popular was the handout? When Ruliffson went to the park after the concert to pick up discarded copies, he "only found six copies left behind," he said. "Obviously, a lot of people took these home."

Assisting with the outreach effort were Travis County LP Chair **Patrick Dixon**, **Wes Benedict**, **Kevin Boucher**, and **Rock Howard**.

■ TEXAS

Polk Co. LP will battle expensive bond scheme

The Polk County LP says it will oppose a bond proposal that will drive up the price of a planned courthouse — and hurt the poor.

"Borrowing money makes government even more expensive, and it's the poor who feel that expense most of all," said Polk County LP Chair **Kris Overstreet**.

On July 15, the Polk County Commissioners' Court proposed a \$12 million bond issue to build a new courthouse in Livingston. No date has yet been set for the bond election.

County voters should reject the plan, said Overstreet, because the bonds will pay 5% interest (\$600,000 a year), which will push the cost of the project closer to \$24 million.

"If the bond term stretches [to] 20 years, the actual cost of the courthouse project would double, and the taxpayers would pay every penny of it," he said.

Also, the higher taxes to pay off the bonds and interest will hurt the poor, said Overstreet.

"Bonds are loans, paid out by the wealthy, which are paid back through the only revenue government has — tax dollars," he said. "Every dollar spent on interest on government debt is money taken from the poor taxpayers and wasted to make the rich richer."

■ VIRGINIA

Richmond City LP can't stop new arts center tax

The Richmond City Libertarian Party has come up short in an effort to block a tax increase to pay for a downtown arts center.

On July 28, the Richmond city council voted 7-1 to boost the city's meals tax from 5% to 6%. The new rate will be charged on top of the state's 4.5% sales tax, and will cost taxpayers \$2.7 million annually.

The tax — part of a proposed \$30 million subsidy for a new performing arts center — is an "egregious example of government waste," said Richmond City LP Chair **Greg Kontos**.

"By raising taxes, the burden of building the center is put on hardworking people who are too busy paying the already-high taxes to even go to the arts center," he said.

"The people who benefit from the arts center — its patrons and customers — should pay the cost of building it. If it is such a great idea, why can't they raise the [money] from private donors or bank loans?"

The proposed arts complex will include a music hall, a gallery, a theater, offices, and retail space.

Arts center fans are now seeking a 1% increase in the lodging tax in Richmond and in Hanover, Henrico, and Chesterfield counties to raise more money. Libertarians will oppose that tax hike, too, said Kontos.

■ WASHINGTON STATE

Prisoner release project gets thumbs-up from LP

Libertarians have commended the state government for releasing 180 nonviolent drug offenders from prison as a cost-saving move.

"We consider this a reasonable step to take," said Washington state LP Executive Director **Brien Bartels**. "We welcome these former inmates back to civilization and wish them luck in rebuilding their lives."

Starting July 1, the state government is letting about 2,500 nonviolent offenders get out of prison early by allowing them to shave more "good behavior" time off their sentences.

The move, which was authorized by Senate Bill 5990 and signed into law by Governor Gary Locke, will save the state \$40 million over two years.

While the early release of prisoners does not signify an end to the War on Drugs, it does indicate that legislators are starting to view drug violations as a victimless crime, said Bartels.

"Recognizing that drug offenders are not threats to the community means the state is focusing its resources more effectively," he said.

■ WISCONSIN

At meeting, Thompson blasts USA/Patriot Act

The USA/Patriot Act is "incredibly wrong" — and a grave threat to the Bill of Rights.

That was the message **Ed Thompson** conveyed to a packed room at the Rhinelander Public Library on July 3. The public meeting was sponsored by the Unitarian Church.

"The Patriot Act is so incredibly wrong," said Thompson, the Wisconsin LP State Chair and 2002 LP candidate for governor. Citizens need to "fight back" by lobbying politicians at the federal, state, and local level to repeal the law, or to refuse to enforce it, he said.

By showing up at a meeting to oppose the USA/Patriot Act, citizens demonstrated they are the "true patriots of this country and state," said Thompson.

At the end of the meeting, the crowd was asked whether a formal resolution should be passed, demanding the repeal of the USA/Patriot Act. The group voiced a loud unanimous "aye," said Thompson.

The USA/Patriot Act gave the U.S. attorney general the power to install the carnivore e-mail snooping system without a court warrant; expanded the legal definition of a "terrorist;" gave federal law enforcement the power to demand library records; and made it easier for the government to tap multiple phones as part of a "roving wiretap."

■ WISCONSIN

New scandal illustrates two-party 'corruption'

An FBI investigation in alleged illegal fundraising and money laundering by the Democratic Party in Wisconsin is further evidence that the two-party system is "corrupt beyond redemption," say state Libertarians.

"No longer is Wisconsin known as a clean-government state," said Dane County LP Chair **Terry Gray**. "It's a real tragedy that the Republican and Democratic Party politicians continue to lead us down this slippery slope towards corruption, thievery, and misinformation."

On July 3, the *Washington Post* reported that the Washington, DC-based Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee extorted contributions from Wisconsin businesspeople and then illegally funneled them back into the state to evade Wisconsin campaign finance laws. A former State Senate majority leader has been charged in the scheme.

At the same time, the Wisconsin Republican Party hired Sherry Schultz, a state employee who was indicted in the state's "Caucus Scandal," to raise money for them.

The fact that both Republicans and Democrats are engaged in illegal or questionable behavior is proof that the state needs the Libertarian Party, said Wisconsin LP vice chair **Rolf Lindgren**.

"The two-party system is corrupt beyond redemption," he said. "Only another party can bring some credibility and respectability back to Wisconsin."

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THE REVIEW

Repeating history (again)

■ **Fool's Errands: America's Recent Encounters With Nation Building**, by Gary T. Dempsey & Roger W. Fontaine. The Cato Institute. Paperback, 224 pages, \$10.95. Available at: www.Cato.org.

Reviewed by Bill Winter
LP NEWS EDITOR

It may be true that those ignorant of history are doomed to repeat it. But it's equally true that those who repeat history are usually determined to ignore it.

At least, that seems to be the case with Iraq. The United States' mission to eradicate Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction — er, to free the Iraqi people from tyranny — has turned into an open-ended nation-building mission. Spending taxpayer dollars at the rate of \$1 billion a week, the United States will apparently try to rebuild that shattered nation.

However, before taking on that daunting task, Bush administration planners should have read *Fool's Errands*. Published in late 2001, it is more timely than ever. The book examines the U.S.'s last four efforts at nation building — Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo. And as it convincingly demonstrates, the fate of those missions ranged from failure to fiasco.

What is nation-building? One pundit described it best as "social engineering passing as foreign policy." Interestingly, it is a task that appeals to both liberals and conservatives. Liberals like it because it's government do-goodism on a global scale — and it justifies huge foreign aid budgets. Conservatives like it because it gives them a chance to smite enemies of the U.S. — and it justifies huge defense budgets.

The only problem: It hasn't worked. As Dempsey and Fontaine note: "Washington said it would bring order to Somalia, but left chaos; it went to Haiti to restore democracy, but produced tyranny; it intervened in Bosnia to reverse the effects of civil war, but now oversees a province that is not self-sustaining; and it occupied Kosovo to build a multiethnic democracy, but has instead observed widespread ethnic cleansing."

What went wrong? While the results are depressingly the same, the details differ significantly in the four nation-building missions, and *Fool's Errands* examines each one in detail. To recap just two:

■ **Somalia:** In 1992, the African nation spiraled into anarchy after its oppressive government was overthrown. Rival clans launched a bloody, free-for-all civil war. So President Bush (senior) sent in U.S. troops. One optimistic Washington bureaucrat promised a "bright new chapter" in the nation's history. It was not to be. In 1994, after spending \$2.3 billion and seeing 200 American soldiers killed or injured, the U.S. withdrew from Somalia.

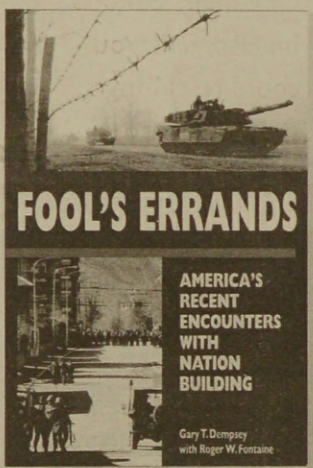
■ **Bosnia:** After the fall of communism, Yugoslavia splintered into feuding factions of Croats, Serbs, and Muslims. Open warfare erupted in the province of Bosnia. A peace treaty was hammered out in 1995, and Clinton sent 20,000 U.S. troops to keep the peace. Secretary of State Madeline Albright cheerfully predicted that the U.S. would quickly build a "unified, multiethnic state." President Clinton estimated the mission would take "about a year." Eight years and \$12 billion later, U.S. troops are still in Bosnia.

Four missions. Four failures. What went wrong?

Simply this: Washington, DC policy makers always *underestimate* the difficulty of what they are trying to achieve, and always *overestimate* the ability of the U.S. government to bring peace, democracy, and prosperity (at gunpoint) to other nations.

Even worse, such nation-building exercises are harmful to America. As Dempsey and Fontaine point out, such missions "tend to expand, rather than limit, the size and scope of the U.S. government, and tend to make the president's powers dominant at the expense of America's republican form of government."

For any would-be nation-builder, *Fool's Errands* should be required reading. As a cautionary lesson in a global Murphy's Law — whatever can go wrong in nation-building, will — this book is brilliant, compelling, and persuasive.



Libertarians score strongly in polls at e-thePeople.com

The Libertarian Party has been showing up in double digits in several recent polls on the popular political website, e-thePeople.org.

In the unscientific polls, visitors to e-thePeople.org can cast their votes in response to political questions, which are suggested by website visitors.

While the LP has been mentioned in several dozen polls over the past few years, here are eight of the most interesting recent ones:

■ **"Are there any candidates for [the] 2004 election worth voting for?"** (Asked on July 18). A generic Libertarian candidate came in fourth with 13%, behind Republican (48%), Democrat (23%) and "No candidate" (14%). The Green candidate came in fifth at 6%.

■ **"Which of the following do you consider yourself?"** (April 19). Coming in fourth was Libertarian with 8%, trailing Conservative/Republican (26%), "New (Conservative) Democrat" (13%), and Left/liberal Democrat (16%). The Green option came in fifth at 5%, and "Other" picked up 32% of the votes.

■ **"If you really thought they could [win], which party would you vote for?"** (July 25). The Libertarian Party came in third with 20%, beating the Constitution Party (15%), the Green Party (10%), and the Reform Party (3%). The Republican Party came in first with 30%, followed by the Democratic Party with 22%.

■ **"What describes your personal political ideology?"** (February 17). Libertarian came in third with 14%, behind Conservative (53%) and Liberal (33%).

■ **"What should real conservatives do to oppose President Bush and the other neocons?"** (July 14). Coming in third was "Abandon the GOP and join the Libertarian Party" with 17%. It trailed "Join the Democrats" (31%) and "Stay in the GOP, and try to restrain the worst neocon excesses" (26%). Another answer: "Give up; Americans want bigger government and empire" (6%).

■ **"Should the far-left liberals leave the Democratic Party and align with the Libertarian Party?"** (April 2). A surprising 48% said, "Yes, maybe that would save the Democratic Party." Another 52% said, "No, the liberals control the Democratic Party and it should remain that way."

■ **"Which of these third-party candidates should be invited to the**

"WHAT DESCRIBES your political ideology?" Libertarian came in third with 14%, behind Conservative (53%) and Liberal (33%)

Presidential debate next year?" (July 25). Leading the pack was Libertarian with 40%. Also-rans included "None of them" (38%), Green (27%), Constitution (13%), Natural Law

(12%), and Reform (10%).

■ **"What political party do you consider yourself to be a member of?"** (August 2). The Libertarian Party came in third with 17%, behind Democrats (39%) and Republicans (24%). Also-rans included the Green Party (2%) and Independent (7%).

LP Communications Director George Getz said, "It's nice to see the Libertarian Party making a strong showing in many of these polls. It confirms that the Internet is still friendly to libertarian ideas. Now, our challenge as a party is to better mobilize this support — and translate it into votes, members, and activists."

The e-thePeople.org website is described as a "digital town hall for the nation" that "promotes intelligent discussion and political action."

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CORRECTIONS

■ In the Politics 2003 column in the August issue, it incorrectly stated that David Morris, who died in June, had managed Jo Jorgensen's 1996 vice presidential campaign. In fact, he managed her 1992 South Carolina Congressional campaign.



Photo by Muni Savyon

Libertarians enjoy 'Maximum Impact Speaking' in Massachusetts

■ Massachusetts LP activist Michael Cloud lectures at a two-day seminar on "Maximum Impact Libertarian Speaking," held at the Sheraton Hotel in Framingham, Massachusetts, on August 2-3, 2003.

The event drew almost 40 people from around the country, and raised about \$7,000 for the Massachusetts LP's campaign to gain permanent ballot status.

The seminar discussed techniques for brainstorming and writing speeches, ways to develop more charisma, the "Seven Deadly Public Speaking Sins," conquering fear of public speaking, and methods of overcoming audience suspicion.

Cloud said such workshops are important for Libertarians because "well-trained activists can accomplish 10 times as much as ordinary activists. Workshop training lets us leverage liberty."

Future seminars on public speaking may be held around the country, said Cloud. Announcements will be made in the Small Government News e-newsletter. To sign up, send an e-mail to: subscribe@SmallGovernmentAct.org.

Cloud was the 2002 Libertarian candidate for U.S. Senate in Massachusetts and is the creator of "The Essence of Political Persuasion" tapes. In 2000, he won the LP's "Thomas Paine Award" for Best Libertarian Communicator.

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Needed: Volunteers and ideas

Hello, everyone! I am Nancy Neale, and I am the Chair of the Convention Committee.

No, I don't have this position because I'm married to that national chair guy. I do have this position because I organized five successful state conventions for the Texas LP and worked on a couple in CA. (I have other related experience as well.) The Convention Committee was chosen by the LNC, and the members of the Committee chose me to be its chair. (Please note that I am celebrating 25 years as a Libertarian, not exactly a newbie.)

First off let me remind you that the 2004 Presidential Nominating Convention will take place over Memorial Day weekend, not around July 4th as has been the case for the past decade. So please mark your calendars or put up a big sticky-note about it somewhere!

As you know, the Libertarian Party is not exactly rolling in dough these days. As such, most of the planning and organizing of the 2004 LP National Convention will be done by dedicated volunteers. (Some LPHQ staff will be involved as well.)

But don't let our "amateur standing" fool you. I have every reason to believe that we can put on a national convention that is just as good if not better than what has been done in the past. (I'm full of ideas.)

We also plan to utilize Libertarians (and non-LP-ers sympathetic to our cause) who may have a skill or be in a profession to provide a product or service needed for the Convention, either gratis or at a reduced rate. I think there's a lot of under-utilized talent amongst our ranks. I am encouraged by who I've met so far, and am still on the lookout for some of you great and talented Libertarians who can help in this endeavor.

I'm looking for people who could help with set design and building and general staging. We'll also need people to help with some of the technical (audio, lighting, etc.) aspects. I've got some guys already in this area, but it won't hurt to have a back-up plan! Of course, these things will have to be coordinated with the hotel as well.

I am also putting out a call for musical talent. Please understand that I'm not talking about putting on the "LP Amateur Hour"! I'm looking for real talent here (not that you have to be a professional to be good) and I would want to hear your stuff.

I envision having musicians, especially during the evening events — some as featured performers (solos or ensembles) and some as background enhancement (like a solo piano or violin, or string quartet) at a reception. I can make no promises, but would love to hear from you and then make final decisions based on the submissions I get.

You are welcome to submit any thoughts or ideas you have about any aspect of the Convention: speakers, scheduling, vendors, pricing, etc. I just ask that you keep it civil, brief and coherent; if you send me a tome (or give me orders) I won't read it.

And please don't give me extra work to do that you could do yourself. What I mean is, don't say, "I read this book or article by so-and-so and I think they'd make a great speaker." At least get me their contact information; you could even contact them yourself and find out their requirements; certainly don't make any promises.

You'll hear more from me from time to time as the Convention evolves — and in my experience that's exactly what happens, they do evolve.

I really do expect this to be a great convention, so at least "pencil it in" to be in Atlanta next Memorial Day weekend!

In Liberty,
Nancy Neale
convention@hq.lp.org



Georgia Libertarians gear up to fight SPLOST tax increase

Libertarians are leading a campaign to kill a SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) in Clayton County, in northwest Georgia.

The Clayton County LP announced it will commence a comprehensive campaign to stop the proposed tax that could cost county residents \$240 million over five years.

"The Libertarian Party of Clayton will launch a door-to-door, yard sign, e-mail, and web campaign to inform voters about the SPLOST," said past Clayton County LP Chair Philip Bradley on July 8.

"It will also host public forums, inviting county commissioners to hear what taxpayers have to say about the massive tax increase being proposed."

The SPLOST referendum will be held on September 16.

From 6% to 7%

If passed, it would raise the county sales tax by 1 cent, from 6% to 7%. The tax, which was proposed by the Clayton County Commission, would pay for roads and six recreation centers.

A self-styled "citizen's group" called Recreation and Roads 2003 said it will lobby in favor of the tax hike — saying it is important for "the future of Clayton County."

However, Bradley said the tax is a big mistake.

"IN THIS ECONOMY, local governments should be cutting costs, not introducing a quarter-billion dollars in new taxes."

— Philip Bradley

"At a time when people are being laid off work and forced to endure financial belt-tightening at home, the [county commission] is asking the taxpayers of Clayton to give themselves a tax increase," he said.

"In this economy, local governments should be cutting costs and taxes, not introducing new taxes. Especially not when the proposed tax increase represents a quarter-billion dollars in new government spending and special projects."

Bradley also rejected the argument, made by some tax supporters, that out-of-county residents will pay a majority of the tax when they come to Clayton County to make purchases.

"The unavoidable fact is, every time a person living in Clayton makes a purchase, be it a Coke or a new car, they will be paying more in sales tax

if the measure passes," he said.

The Clayton County LP expects to spend \$1,200 to \$1,800 to fight the SPLOST, said Bradley. In 2002, a similar effort to hike the SPLOST lost by 3,805 votes.

Meanwhile, in nearby Cobb County, Garrett Michael Hayes, the Georgia LP's 2002 candidate for governor, has signed on as a spokesman for Cobb Citizens For Tax Relief, which is also campaigning against a SPLOST increase in that country.

The SPLOST is actually a "Special PLUNDER Local Option Sales Tax," charged Russell Young, chairman of Cobb Citizens For Tax Relief.

Stifling economy

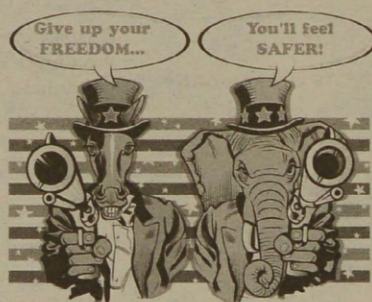
"It's stifling the economy of Cobb County at a time when we should be helping rebuild," he said. "The proponents of the SPLOST are telling people that no one is against this tax. That's just not true. There are a lot of people against it, and for very good reasons."

If passed, the SPLOST would keep the Cobb County sales tax at 5%, instead of allowing it to fall to 4%, as scheduled. The higher tax — \$670 million over five years — would fund school construction projects.

Cobb Citizens For Tax Relief will sponsor events, advertising, and community meetings before the September election to get out the "real story" about the tax, said Young.

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LP Literature & Books

■ **Why Government Doesn't Work** by Harry Browne. The 1996 Presidential campaign manifesto: Explains why government doesn't work, and why it will never work as well as voluntary solutions. Outlines a Libertarian plan for victory. Hardbound, 245 pages. **Cost:** \$11.95

■ **Libertarianism In One Lesson** by David Bergland. Expanded 8th edition. The classic introductory work. Outlines Libertarian positions on all major political issues and contrasts them to liberals and conservatives. A must-read. Softbound, 158 pages. **Cost:** \$10 each; or 5 for \$35.

■ **Which Political Party is 100% Pro-Gun Rights?** Full-page flyer. 2-color (red & blue). Hard-hitting defense of the Second Amendment, designed especially for the gun community. Explains why the LP will never betray gun owners — unlike the Republican Party, which constantly sells them out. **Cost:** Sample: 50¢ or \$7 for 100

■ **America's Libertarian Heritage** by David Bergland. 16-page booklet. Concise overview of Libertarian philosophy and solutions in an easy-to-read question-and-answer format. **Cost:** \$1 each

■ **Million Dollar Bills:** Green Ink. A faux \$1,000,000 bill that highlights excessive federal spending — and points out that the federal government spends more than \$1 million every five seconds. Perfect for Tax Day, taxpayer groups, and almost any other outreach project! **Cost:** Sample: 50¢ or \$5 for 100

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■ **Don't Blame Me... I Voted Libertarian** (Blue & white; 800-ELECT-US phone number below.)

■ **Vote Libertarian/800-ELECT-US** (Blue & white.)

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Cost: \$1 each; \$7.50 for 10; \$50 for 100

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■ **Vote Libertarian**

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■ **Libertarian Party:**

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- _____ Brochure: "Equal Rights/America's Gun Owners"
- _____ **OUT OF STOCK** 100% Pro-Gun Rights?"
- _____ America's Libertarian Heritage booklet
- _____ Fact Sheets: LP history/bibliography (package)
- _____ World's Smallest Political Quiz
- _____ "Million Dollar Bill" Literature

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- _____ Don't Blame Me...I Voted Libertarian
- _____ I'm Pro-Choice on Everything!
- _____ ENOUGH IS ENOUGH/VOTE LIBERTARIAN
- _____ Vote Libertarian/1-800-ELECT-US

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- _____ Second line says: "1-800-ELECT-US"

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- _____ Libertarian Political Action Booklet
- _____ Statue of Liberty logo master
- _____ LP Statue of Liberty logo on 3-1/2" PC disk
- _____ Newsprint ads: "Libertarian Party — Defenders of Liberty" set of seven.

Books for Sale

- _____ **OUT OF STOCK** Doesn't Work
- _____ By Harry Browne
- _____ Libertarianism In One Lesson
- _____ By David Bergland

Buttons

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- _____ VOTE LIBERTARIAN/800-ELECT-US
- _____ Libertarian Party: Pro-Choice on Everything

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Website with 'reformatted' party Platform is now online

Continued from Page 3

tee, Inc. (LNC) in August 2001.

One of the 20 political strategies in the plan calls for the party to "Re-develop the LP Platform, presenting both direction and destination, with an eye toward electoral success (without compromising core beliefs)."

The Platform Special Committee — 20 LP members from around the USA who are collaborating via e-mail

— is taking each plank and "reformatting" its language into four categories, said Squyres:

■ **The Issue:** Committee members will try to frame each issue in a way that will allow Libertarians to "control the debate."

■ **Principle:** Will clearly state the Libertarian principle behind each plank, and illustrate "exactly how that principle applies to a particular

"THIS PROJECT IS not about new language. It is about putting in place a logical format."

—George Squyres

issue. We have to be able to deliver [our] principle on any given issue, in a realistic way that ordinary people can relate to and believe in. And we must do this in a very few words."

■ **Solutions:** Will offer a Libertarian solution for every issue, and "state the exact steps we would take to get there. [This satisfies] both the destination and the direction concerns."

■ **Transitions:** Will showcase political action Libertarians have already taken on this issue.

The goal of the reformatting project is to craft Platform language that "will not be the rambling emotional operation of the past, but a concise, insightful solution" that presents a "clear, strong message to the voting public," said Squyres.

Logical framework

"This project is not about new language, as language will always evolve over time," he said. "It is about putting in place a logical format that will govern whatever language goes into the platform now and in the future."

None of the proposed changes are permanent until delegates at the party's 2004 national convention — to be held in Atlanta, Georgia on May 27-31, 2004 — vote to approve them.

LP members who visit the new website will get the opportunity to see the proposed changes and make suggestions — and that input will be carefully considered, said Squyres.

"All comments will be reviewed by a number of people," he said. "When a suggestion improves either the reformatting process or the language, then the individual [Committee] champion of a given plank may substitute that suggestion into the plank."

The committee is seeking input as soon as possible, said Squyres, so it can present proposed planks to the LNC at its meeting in Denver, Colorado on September 13-14, 2003.

Additional information about the reformatting project is available on the website, said Squyres.

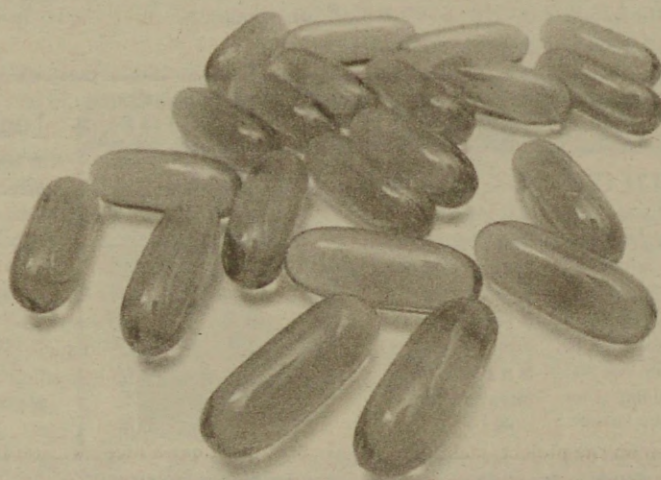
Questions answered

"I hope everyone who visits the website will read the information and articles on the main page and on the articles page," he said. "A lot of questions are answered there that regularly get asked, as well as articles on the project and its progress."

"Also, I am hoping that many of the party's elder statesmen will involve themselves in the project and give us the benefit of their longer term experience."

The Platform Special Committee consists of Mike Dixon (NC), Dean Ahmad (MD), Lorenzo Gaztanaga (MD), Michael Gilson de Lemos (FL), Henry Haller (PA), Sean Haugh (NC), Ed Hoch (AK), Erin Hollinden (IN), Robert Murphy (OK), George Squyres (AZ), Joe Hauptmann (IN), Mark Schreiber (IN), Wayne Nygren (CA), Dan Nafe (FL), Steve Hoffman (GA), Austin Hough (IL), Keith Edwards (MI), Bonnie Scott (NY), Norma Skoog (OH), Julian Heicklen (PA), Robert Restivo (TX), and Greg Clark (WA).

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Libertarians launch petitioning drive to repeal grocery tax in Littleton, Colorado

Libertarians in Littleton, Colorado are circulating petitions to put a grocery tax repeal on the ballot — undaunted by the failure of a similar initiative in Montrose.

The Arapahoe County Libertarian Party is working to collect 2,000 signatures to qualify the initiative for the November ballot. Town law requires 1,326 signatures to qualify an initiative.

Arapahoe County activist Frank Atwood said he started the project because he believes the grocery tax is harmful to the town's poor residents.

"The tax is unfair; it disproportionately taxes the poor," he said. "It is a regressive tax."

If it qualifies for the ballot and is approved by voters, the initiative would repeal the town's 1% tax on groceries, saving taxpayers about \$600,000 a year.

2% of town budget

The grocery tax, which is imposed on food purchased for home consumption, accounts for about 2% to 3% of the city's annual budget. The town also imposes a 3% tax on restaurant meals.

If approved, the grocery tax repeal would be phased in, said Atwood, giving the town time adjust to the loss of revenue.

"This repeal would go into effect with half in January 2004 and the remaining half in January 2005," he said.



■ Arapahoe County LP activists Frank Atwood (l) and Severin Schneider, petitioning clipboards in hand, work to repeal the "unfair" 1% tax on groceries in Littleton, Colorado.

Severin Schneider, who is helping with the signature-gathering efforts, said repealing the grocery tax would help accomplish Libertarian goals.

"All levels of government are too big," he said. "Any way we can create an environment that forces any level of government to reduce spending is a worthwhile effort."

"[Also], Libertarians are too often a lot of talk and not much action.

This is one way we can put our beliefs in action and effect immediate change."

Atwood is working with Republican Marty Bolt and Democrat Elwood Johnsen on the project, making it "a tri-partisan effort," he said.

A similar grocery tax repeal effort failed in Montrose, Colorado in July, when residents rejected it on a 71.9%-28.1% vote. [See story on page 4].

POLITICS 2003

Listening to *The Law* and Chinese coverage

■ In Pennsylvania, **Ronald W. Satz** has announced his candidacy for Commissioner of Bucks County. In Washington, **Lonnie Eachus** will run for Spokane city council. In West Virginia, **Simon McClure** has filed papers to run for governor. In Indiana, **Brad Hyatt** announced he will run for mayor of New Castle. In Kentucky, **Melanie Hughes** said she will run for mayor of New Albany. In Louisiana, **Brent Sanders** has announced his candidacy for State Representative (District 38).

■ **Book News:** The Libertarian Party is mentioned in a new book, *Information and American Democracy*, by Bruce Bimber (Cambridge University Press, 2003). The nonfiction work, which looks at how political organizations have changed as the flow of political information has changed, cites the LP for using the Internet to stop the Know Your Customer regulation in 1998. Want to listen to **Frederick Bastiat's** *The Law*? You can download the entire book in .mp3 format from www.FreeAudio.org at no cost, thanks to libertarian **Art Pollard**. He plans to make other libertarian classics available in the future.

■ **Miscellaneous:** In California, the new San Francisco chapter of Outright Libertarians hosted an OPH Booth at the city's annual LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered) Pride Celebration on June 29. LP candidate for mayor **Mike Denny** also had a car in the parade. Interestingly, the LP presence was covered in the *World Journal*, the most widely circulated Chinese newspaper in North America. In Connecticut, **Lenny Rasch** was re-elected State Chair. In Ohio, the state LP moved into its new headquarters in Columbus, (700 Morse Road, Suite 208) on July 19. In Washington, DC, **Rob Kampia** has been elected State Chair of the District of Columbia LP.

■ **Entertainment:** **Robert Heinlein's** classic, libertarian-themed sci-fi novel *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress* has been optioned by Phoenix Pictures. The 1966 book is widely credited with coining the popular phrase, "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch" (TANSTAAFL). No word on when the movie might go into production or be released.

■ In Michigan, Libertarian-in-office **Jeff Steinport** got a nice mention in a local newspaper. The *Grand Rapids Press* complimented the Board of Education member for casting the single "no" vote on a motion to set the date for a special school-tax election. By not setting the election on the same day as an already-scheduled school election, noted Steinport, voter participation will be reduced and the town will have to spend an extra \$150,000. "Mr. Steinport was right to point that out," said the *Grand Rapids Press*. New York Libertarian **Richard Cooper's** efforts to thwart the "Time\$cam" — a bid by the *New York Times* to use eminent domain to seize private property to build a new office — received national coverage in July. He was praised in a column by Michelle Malkin that described the *New York Times'* plans as "legalized theft" and "crony capitalism." Malkin's column appears in 100+ newspapers.



■ **Jeff Steinport:** 'Right' on vote.

■ **Campaigning 101:** Running for office? Two how-to books might help: *Running for Office* (\$34 plus shipping) and *Winning Elections* (\$50 plus shipping). Both are written by Ronald A. Faucheux, editor of *Campaign & Elections* magazine. Order at: www.campaignline.com/.

■ **Libertarian products:** LP member **Barry Fiegel** is offering two nice shirts for Libertarians: The front of one shows the face of the Statue of Liberty (green on ivory/\$15-\$17); the other the entire Statue of Liberty with NYC's World Trade Center twin towers as a backdrop (full color on ivory/16-\$18). To order, visit: www.LadyLibertyShirts.com. The **Heartland Institute** is offering two provocative bumper stickers: "I believe in freedom. What do YOU believe in?" and "I believe in property rights. What do YOU believe in?" Cost: \$1.49 each, with volume discounts. To order, visit: www.Heartland.org. Or call: (312) 377-4000.

■ In New York, Libertarians are mourning the July 13 death of **Dottie-Lou Brokaw**, a past vice chair of the New York LP and the party's 1990 candidate for lieutenant governor.

■ In Indiana, **Brad Klopfenstein**, a Libertarian candidate for Indianapolis City-County Council (District 15), has been endorsed by the city's Fraternal Order of Police. "This endorsement will be a huge boost to my campaign," said Klopfenstein, who is only the second Libertarian candidate ever endorsed by the FOP. In New York, Libertarian **Jak Karako** has qualified for the Democrat primary ballot for City Council (District 4). He is also petitioning to get on the ballot for the general election as a Libertarian. In North Carolina, **Christopher Cole** has filed papers to run for the Charlotte city council.

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THE FORUM

From 1856, an argument against temperance laws

Horatio Seymour was governor of New York before and during the Civil War. In 1868 he narrowly lost to Ulysses S. Grant for the presidency. He was a statesman respected by all political parties.

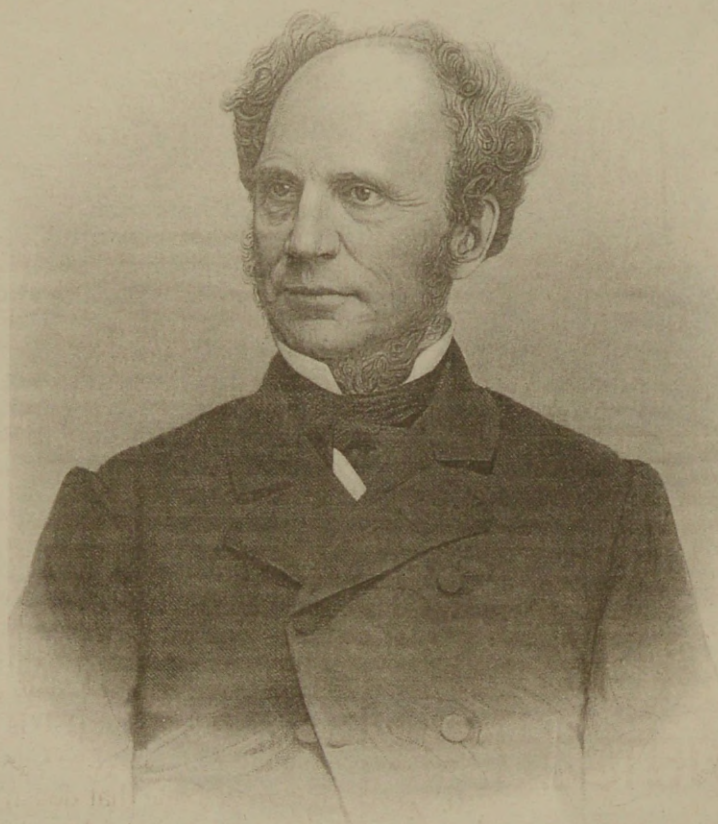
In the following speech, given on July 4, 1856, Governor Seymour condemns the use of Prohibition laws to prevent the drinking of alcohol.

His words ring true today in the current battle to repeal the legal restrictions against drugs like marijuana. His speech has been edited for brevity.

We have had forced upon us in many of the states a coercive temperance law, which is claimed by its advocates to be a new and certain remedy for most of the evils which effect society, but which is the oft-repeated and always futile effort to extend jurisprudence of statutory laws beyond their proper bounds. It violates Constitutional laws, and it will increase the evils it claims to abolish.

We are made free by written constitutions restraining majorities and protecting minorities, and forbidding the legislators from touching a single

By Horatio Seymour



right of a single citizen.

The objections to this legislation are of the gravest kind. It is not merely against drinking but against thinking. It is well described by an

eminent clergyman as a "lazy philanthropy which tries to get rid of the duties of life by declaring its evils are abolished by act of Legislature."

The efforts of those engaged in

promoting temperance by reason and persuasion are "twice blessed." They enlarge their own intellect, and improve their own character, while they influence and benefit others.

But when the law gives them power over their fellow men, poor human nature shows its wonted weakness. Pride and passion are aroused. The power it gives over the consciences and actions of others creates a vindictive spirit on the one hand and calls forth resistance on the other.

Intemperance is evil

The reasoning urged by the advocates of this statute is this: "Intemperance is an evil. It is the duty of government to suppress evil; therefore a coercive law is right."

The great question is this: Is coercion a rightful and effective remedy? Its advocates are hasty in vilifying those who doubt its efficacy. The arguments upon which it is founded have caused most of the political, social, and religious evils which oppress mankind.

Those who hold or usurp power are wont to say that they deem heresy, or infidelity, or dangerous habits of thinking freely, evils, and that it is the duty of a state to remove evils, and therefore they may punish freedom of thinking, as well as freedom of drinking.

Another objection is, that it creates a spirit of resistance which increases the evil it claims to root out. This fact has been confirmed by efforts to suppress particular narcotics by force. In China, the attempt to put down the use of opium by force has been followed by the greatest social, moral, and political evils.

Hypocrisy

The Maine (temperance) law converts a dangerous, and in many circumstances, a destructive, habit of drinking intoxicating liquors into one

more dangerous and pernicious, for it adds the meanness of concealment, and the demoralization of hypocrisy.

Persuasion requires virtue, ability and sincerity. Coercive laws are best enforced by the violent, vindictive, and base. Hence these are now taking the lead. A benevolent enterprise has fallen into the hands of those afflicted with a "vindictive philanthropy," which deranges them with the idea that they are virtuous, because they are denunciatory. The wise and the thoughtful are overruled by men raging with the delirium tremens of fanaticism.

Public officers, judges, and clergymen, are compelled to denounce the use of wine as crime, when speaking with all the solemnities of official station, or invested with the sacredness of the pulpit.

A mockery

Yet, they show, by their constant intercourse with those who do use intoxicating liquors, that this is a formal language, a mockery, a compliance with the terms of law which all feel to be untrue.

Our prisons are the examples of the perfect system of restraint. Their inmates, for a long series of years, are entirely prevented from indulging in intemperance or any kindred evil. They lead lives of perfect regularity, industry and propriety, because they are compelled to do so. Yet few are reformed by this.

The progress of civilization has been marked by the contraction of coercive laws.

■ **About the editor:** John Chodes, who edited this speech by Horatio Seymour, is the former communications director of the New York City Libertarian Party. The full speech can be found in David Croly's Seymour and Blair: Their Lives and Services, published by Richardson and Company of New York, in 1868.

Why a strong presidential campaign is the LP's best strategy in 2004

I believe that the best use of Libertarian Party resources, for the next 18 months, is to do whatever it takes to run a strong presidential campaign.

I disagree with the idea that the best way to advance party goals is to concentrate on electing people to non-partisan city and town office.

In U.S. history, minor parties that have consistently carried out well-run presidential campaigns, without a break, have had the strongest influence on policy.

1% of the vote

The Socialist Party and the Prohibition Party are the only two minor parties that consistently polled at least 1% of the vote for president, over a period of at least 20 years.

The Socialist Party's role in influencing U.S. policy is fairly well known. The Prohibition Party's role is not as well known. The Socialist Party usually polled 3% during the period 1904-1932, although it hit 6%

in 1912 and less than 1% in 1928.

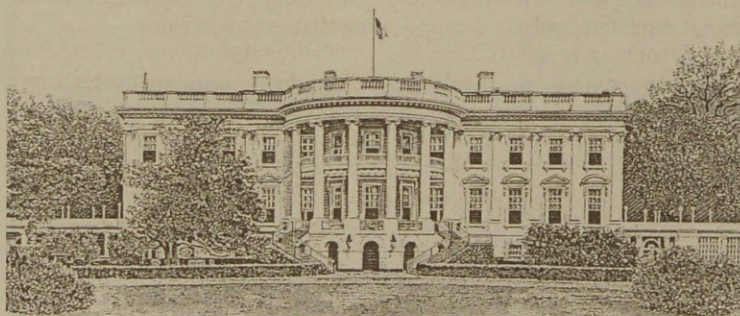
The Prohibition Party was weaker, polling between 1% and 2% in the entire period 1884-1920, except that it hit 2.2% in 1892 and fell below 1% in 1896.

The Socialist Party's presidential campaigns never caused the outcome of the winner to change.

But the Prohibition Party's presidential campaigns cost the Republicans the election in both 1884 and 1916 (both years, the Prohibition Party presidential candidate was an ex-Republican Governor). The 1884 Prohibition campaign tilted New York to the Democrats; the 1916 Prohibition campaign tilted California to the Democrats.

After the Prohibitionists cost the Republicans the presidency for the second time, in 1916, Congress passed the Constitutional amendment imposing prohibition, early in 1917.

By Richard Winger



This amendment had first been introduced in Congress in 1875. It languished for 42 years before it passed. I believe the Republicans decided to pass it because they were tired of losing votes to the Prohibition Party. The Republican national platform had never even hinted at any Republican Party support for prohibition (nor had the Democratic platform), but they passed it anyway.

Of course, the Prohibition Party didn't set out to alter the outcome of a presidential election. The Prohi-

bition Party simply put on a vigorous presidential campaign, with clockwork regularity. No one can predict how these things turn out.

I conclude from this history that it pays a minor party in the U.S. to consistently carry out a vigorous presidential campaign. I am making this point because, over the years, many Libertarians seem to have concluded that putting resources into a presidential campaign doesn't pay off.

There are additional reasons why it's especially desirable for the LP to

run a strong presidential campaign in 2004. We may have the field mostly to ourselves. If the Democrats nominate Governor Howard Dean, the Greens will not make a vigorous run. No other minor party seems likely to do anything vigorous either. Yet the electorate is very unhappy now, and is likely to be unhappy next year also.

New lawsuit

It's always possible that there will be a breakthrough with presidential debates. The National Voting Rights Institute, headquartered in Boston, is already planning a new lawsuit against the Commission on Presidential Debates. We may get a breakthrough.

Either way, a third party that genuinely wants to influence American politics has its best opportunity to do so by running strong presidential campaigns.

■ **About the author:** Richard Winger is the editor of Ballot Access News.

How to unlock the zen of Libertarian thought

People often ask me, after they've heard a little bit about libertarianism and been generally pleased, "Well, what about social workers, what about unions, what about fighting discrimination?"

Well, I admit I don't give very good answers, because those guys asking me know much more about those topics than I ever will or plan to learn. Sorry about that.

There's just one solution. If you want to know *what* libertarians think, and how we apply our ideas to complex, long-running social problems, you'll have to learn *how* libertarians think.

There is a zen to libertarian thought. It's a thought process that discounts the existence of the state and its agents. We look to history for pre-statist solutions, and (although we don't like to admit it) we look to futurism and even science fiction for post-statist solutions.

Here is an easy example of how to think like a Libertarian. Start by

imagining there is no more government money to be spent, for any purpose. Never mind why.

Imagine the government is going to retreat to its duties outlined in Article 1 Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution and stop paying for a lot of things we have taken for granted. No more price supports for farmers. No more regulators peeking into meat lockers or vats of drugs. No more Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid. No more state money for education, welfare, or baseball stadiums.

Solve that problem?

While that is at the top of your mind, think about a problem you know a lot about. If it were up to you, how would it get solved? How would you solve that problem, alleviate the suffering of the poor, the elderly, or the ball club owners — without forcing someone else to pay for your solu-

tion? Forcing someone to pay for your solution creates suffering that is just spread out over more households.

Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself: What do you dislike about the way the government handles this problem? What is the simplest way to solve it? A lot of people's problems with welfare or business or the law stem from the unending complexity created by legislators and bureaucrats.

What is the least costly way? If you don't like to think in terms of dollars, because that seems callous, think in terms of rain forest trees or panda bears, because dollars wasted on ineffective problem-solving are dollars that eventually will leak out of the world economy and prevent us from saving endangered species or virgin lands. It's the old "Asian butterfly flaps wings, hurricane devas-

tates Florida" situation.

An extra dollar spent on Medicare in the U.S. might have saved thousands of lives in Sub-Saharan Africa if devoted to open trade or private charity, instead of a pay raise for a bureaucrat or an HMO executive or simple fraud or errors.

Musings

The fact is, if you devote some time to those musings, and follow up with some research, you will find that a lot of government solutions don't work well; that politicians replaced pre-existing systems that met your ideals better; that grassroots initiative and neighborliness beats government social workers every time.

What Libertarians are asking you to do is put your prodigious imaginations to work, instead of waiting

for the government to take care of it — or worse yet, actively lobbying the government to do that.

So imagine: What would you do if there were no government? How would you help your neighbors solve their problems if the government stuck to its limited duties of defending borders, providing courts, and managing the police? What have other free people done to solve their problems?

There is a summation that I can add to persuading you to persuade yourself about the justice and practicality of libertarian solutions. It comes from that most libertarian of the ancient books, the Tao de Ching: "Too many words exhaust the reckoning; it is better to seek the answer within you."

■ **About the author:** *Brien Bartels is the executive director of the Libertarian Party of Washington state. This essay reprinted from Washington Liberty, June/July 2001.*

THE VOLUNTEER

The 'sadness and hope' strategy for Libertarian Party candidates

The Libertarian Party frightens voters. Most voters know little of us besides what the media portrays. And the media show our more alarming side. What we stand for is often expressed in absolute and immoderate terms.

The Libertarian Party frightens people, and frightened voters will not listen to you, much less vote for you.

To be effective you must be as non-threatening as possible. This means soft tone of voice, retiring posture, and only two emotions: sadness and hope.

And slowly voters will start to listen. Slowly, only a few this year and a few more next election. Until we scare them again.

How does the "sadness and hope" technique work?

Here's how you could respond to questions that Libertarian candidates frequently get:

■ "Yes, I am sad I had to run. I am sure that there are many others who could do a better job than me, but sadly none of them chose to enter the race."

■ "Yes, I am saddened that the [local television station or League of Women Voters] did not invite me to the debate, but the true loss is to the voters — who did not get a chance to know all the choices available to them in this race. And I am hopeful that these public-spirited institutions will include all candidates next time."

Always remember that no Libertarian candidate has to convince or

to persuade anyone to vote for them. The police and the tax collector are driving voters to us every day. All we have to do is not scare them away.

The greatest difficulty is dealing with the electronic media who want sound bites when our message is reflective, not impulsive. It is a very difficult temptation to resist, but resist our candidates must.

Any "hot button" question can be answered by saying, "We should go slow and be careful. Americans should work toward more freedom. But we must be very careful not to allow one person's freedom to harm another."

Slowly and carefully

When pressed by the reporter for specifics, repeat again: "We must go slowly and carefully." Soon enough, the media will come to understand that the candidate is going to be slow and careful in answering the reporter, regardless of how "urgent" the interview tone is.

And the voter will come to understand that Libertarian candidates are not flustered by reporters.

The print media is our true home, for our issues require thought and reflection. Still slow and easy, and still only two emotions. The key is to get and to keep the focus on the issues and not the candidate.

If the reporter does not ask issue

questions, gently redirect the discussion to them.

Reporter: "How much money will you spend on your campaign?"

Candidate: "Hopefully, enough to get the issues before the voters."

Reporter: "How much money does your campaign have to spend?"

Candidate: "I do not know. How much do you think we need to have to get the issues out?"

Reporter: "Why should some vote for a third-party candidate who has no chance of winning?"

Candidate: "A voter should vote Libertarian because that voter wants less taxes and less government. Even the traditional parties will notice."

Reporter: "What are you mad about; why are you running?"

Candidate: "I really am more sad than angry. Sad that the issues were not being addressed by the other candidates."

Reporter: "All right, what are the issues?"

Candidate answers, slowly and carefully.

Remember, *pity* the other candidates whose good intentions sadly cause so much harm.

And *respect* the voter whose good intelligence will eventually see the light. If we do not scare them away.

■ **About the author:** *Libertarian John Hawley lives in Dallas, Texas. He is the vice chair of the Texas LP. This essay reprinted from the April-June 2002 issue of Texas Liberty.*

What They're Saying About The Free State Project:

"I think FSP is a TERRIFIC idea. I know a lot of people have botched 'new country' and 'let's take over a county' ideas, but FSP is different. Not only do they have the best plan I've seen for actually making it happen, it's one that doesn't ask people to front a bunch of cash or risk making any moves, until a critical mass has been reached. Even if it's a long shot, the chance of having an example of freedom at work — that 'shining city on the hill' — is too good to pass up."

Louis James, free-market.net

"Who has not dreamt of a place in which common sense and mutual respect replace most of the laws on the books and people don't need the threat of government in order just to behave themselves? But how many have ever done anything about it?"

Keith Olbermann, MSNBC

"What can be done now? Are there any signs that those Americans who want to unconstitutionally control the lives of others are going to let up soon? I say no, but there's a peaceful resolution proposed by Free State Project, whose motto is, 'Liberty in our lifetime.'"

Walter Williams, economist and author

"A free state might show the rest of the world what can be done ... Let's think seriously about this."

Claire Wolfe, libertarian author



www.freestateproject.org

THE DIRECTOR

Yes, good things are happening in the party

Cordial greetings. It's an honor to be your new executive director. While I understand the very real challenges we face, I wanted to reflect on a few of the positive things happening in the party. We are addressing our challenges head on — and, thanks to you, are making progress.

Here's a few of my recent impressions about the state of the party, beginning with a recent trip out West.

I headed off early to catch a flight to Seattle. On the ground at SEATAC airport, I grabbed a rental car and headed down the coast. The Libertarian National Committee (LNC) quarterly meeting was in Seattle the next day, so I had time for a visit to the state LP headquarters.

A 150-mile drive through majestic countryside landed me in Beaverton. Looking up from the map, I spotted a handsome brick building at the intersection of two busy streets. Two large "Libertarian Party" signs hung over each side of the building.

Both faces of the building, visible to the street, were glass. You could see inside. And inside, the place was packed: Volunteers, students, county leaders, state leaders, and Libertarian officeholders. Colorful banners hung overhead, along with LP campaign signs.

I met Tom Cox, the State Chair, and Richard Burke, the full-time executive director. Tom had run a spirited race for governor, crisscrossing the state, and ended up with 5% of the vote. Richard had just won re-election to the Tualatin Valley Water Board with 60% of the vote. Under his leadership as president, the water board will retire its last general obligation bond in December 2005. On that date, they will no longer take money from property taxes — just from the sale of water. Thanks to a Libertarian, government coercion will be reduced.

Libertarians are winning elections. Libertarian officeholders are putting our principles into practice. County parties are earning media attention. Good things are happening in Oregon.

Halfway across the county, Mark Rutherford and the Indiana crew may have big news brewing.

Reverend Greg Dixon has a real shot at a seat on the Indianapolis city council. Greg was the pastor at Indiana Baptist Temple and took a principled stand against the IRS in a tax dispute. It became a national news story when the IRS confiscated the church. Greg is now going door to door, along with 60 volunteers, asking for votes. He's telling people, "If the government has the power to take your beer, they have the power to take my Bible." The polls look good.

In North Carolina, Sean Haugh, R. Lee Wrights, and others have started two new LP county organizations, bringing the total to 28. John Evans has a strong shot at a city council seat in Wilmington. And the five Libertarians elected to various Soil and Water Commissions around the state are showing they can not only get elected, but have an impact once they are in office. North Carolina looks good.

In Texas, some innovative thinking is going on. Rick McGinnis, vice chair of the Travis County LP in Austin, is trying a new approach. The county party has about 250 members and about 75 activists.

They want to take it to the next level, and are pulling together a blue-ribbon board of advisors. These are people who have successfully taken on complex challenges with daunting odds — and found a way to make it work. They are successful entrepreneurs, corporate chieftains, and an intensive care unit physician.

They have agreed to get their expert minds wrapped around the hard problems a county LP faces. How does a third party break into a two-party-controlled system? How do you raise money when you don't have favors to sell?

McGinnis also hopes to get connected to the advisors' circle of friends and colleagues, and then cross-pollinate them back into the LP. The strategy is to build relationships, make friends, swell the ranks, and grow name recognition among voters in Travis County.

When I went to bed in Beaverton, Oregon that night, it had been a long day, but I felt at peace about the present — and excitement about the future. I saw the core of the Libertarian Party in action.

Our strength is in the volunteers and the donors, the officeholders and the candidates. I saw their commitment to the party and felt their passion for freedom. I saw people taking action to make it happen. And that, in the long run, will win the day.



By Joe Seehusen
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

How to solve the United States' \$6,736,489,954,145 problem

EDITOR'S NOTE: How can Libertarianism solve America's problems? Each issue, *LP News* will showcase how "Libertarian Solutions" — or interim steps in a more libertarian direction — can help improve our nation.

By Bill Winter
LP NEWS EDITOR

If you had visited the online National Debt Clock at 12:00 noon on August 1, you would have seen this figure: \$6,736,489,356,420.66.

That's the amount of money owed by the federal government: Over \$6.7 trillion dollars.

But if you visited it again just 30 seconds later, you would have seen a different, bigger number: \$6,736,489,954,145.59.

That's an increase of about \$590,000 — a half-million dollars — in 30 seconds.

It's a stark reminder of just how quickly the politicians in Washington, DC are plunging this nation deeper and deeper into debt.

The more time that passes, the scarier that number gets.

Had you visited the Debt Clock (www.brillig.com/debt_clock/) one minute later, the number you saw would have been \$1.2 million larger. An hour later, it would have grown by \$70 million. A day later, it would have swelled by \$1.68 billion.

Over the course of the year, the numbers add up to \$613 billion in additional government debt.

Yes, the national debt is back. And so are deficits.

Deficit versus debt

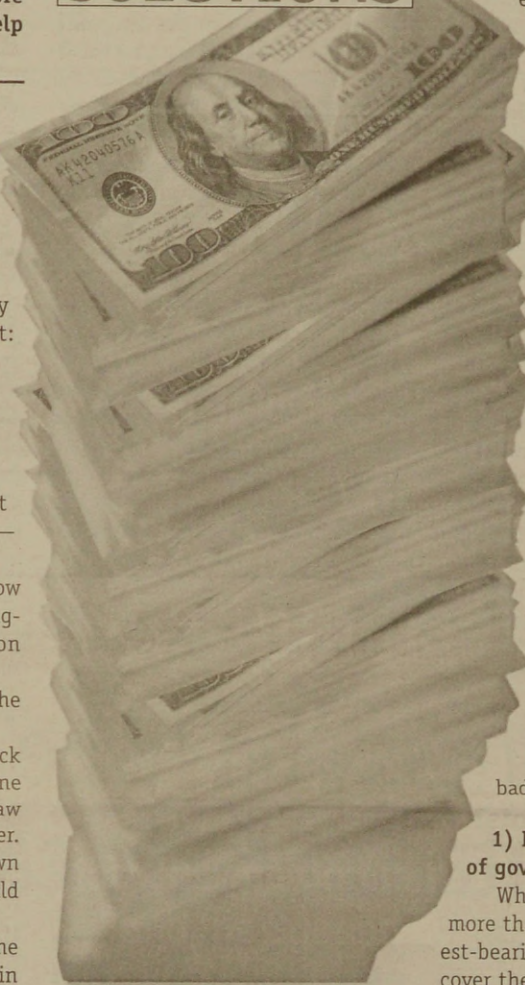
Before we go on, let's define our terms: The deficit is the amount of overspending politicians do in one year. In 2003, for example, the federal government will take in \$1.75 trillion in taxes, and spend \$2.21 trillion. The difference — \$455 billion — is the deficit. (We'll examine later why that number is different from the \$613 billion mentioned above.)

The national debt, by contrast, is the sum of all the yearly deficits (minus whatever the Feds have paid off). The \$6.7 trillion shown on the National Debt Clock is the result of decades of overspending.

As a political issue, deficits dropped off the public radar in the late 1990s. Thanks to a surge in tax revenues and modest fiscal restraint — prompted by tension between Democratic President Bill Clinton and a Republican-controlled Congress — the federal government technically "balanced" the budget for four years. (They didn't really, as we'll see in a moment.)

All that changed in July, when the Bush Administration announced that this year's federal deficit will be \$455 billion. In raw dollars, it's the government's largest-ever deficit, and it catapulted deficits back into the

Libertarian SOLUTIONS



deficit, lowering it to \$455 billion.

The only problem: *It's not true.* Social Security Trust Funds are immediately spent on general government programs. The government just deposits IOUs (Treasury bonds, which it owes itself) in the Trust Fund. It then counts those IOUs as assets.

That's like your right hand lending your left hand \$10, spending it, and then counting the \$10 as an "asset" you owe yourself.

Can't believe that the government gets away with such blatant deception? The proof is in the numbers. In both 1998 and 1999, politicians claimed there was a budget "surplus." Yet, the federal debt increased \$120 billion in 1998 and another \$162 billion in 1999.

Bottom line: Alleged surplus or acknowledged deficit, the national debt gets larger every year.

Why is deficit spending bad? Here's the short answer:

1) Deficits increase the cost of government.

When the government spends more than it takes in, it sells interest-bearing U.S. Treasury bonds to cover the difference. With a massive \$6.7 trillion debt, those interest payments add up.

In the fiscal 2003 budget, the Bush Administration allocated \$181 billion for interest. But with the deficit ballooning, interest payments are ballooning, too — to almost \$1 billion a day, according to U.S. House Rep. Gene Taylor (D-MS).

"In the first nine months of fiscal year 2003, the Treasury spent \$278 billion on interest on the debt," he said. That makes interest payments the federal government's third-largest expense, trailing only Social Security and military spending.

2) It crowds out private borrowing, which hurts the economy.

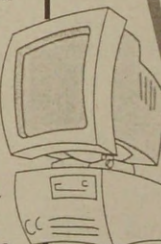
As Benjamin M. Friedman, Harvard University professor of economics, wrote in the *Boston Globe* (July 27, 2003): "What's wrong with continual large budget deficits ... is that they take away the economy's means of achieving economic growth."

"When the government spends more than it takes in from taxes, the Treasury has to borrow to cover the overage," he wrote. "This borrowing absorbs some of the saving done by families and firms, saving that otherwise would have remained available to finance investment in productive new plant and equipment."

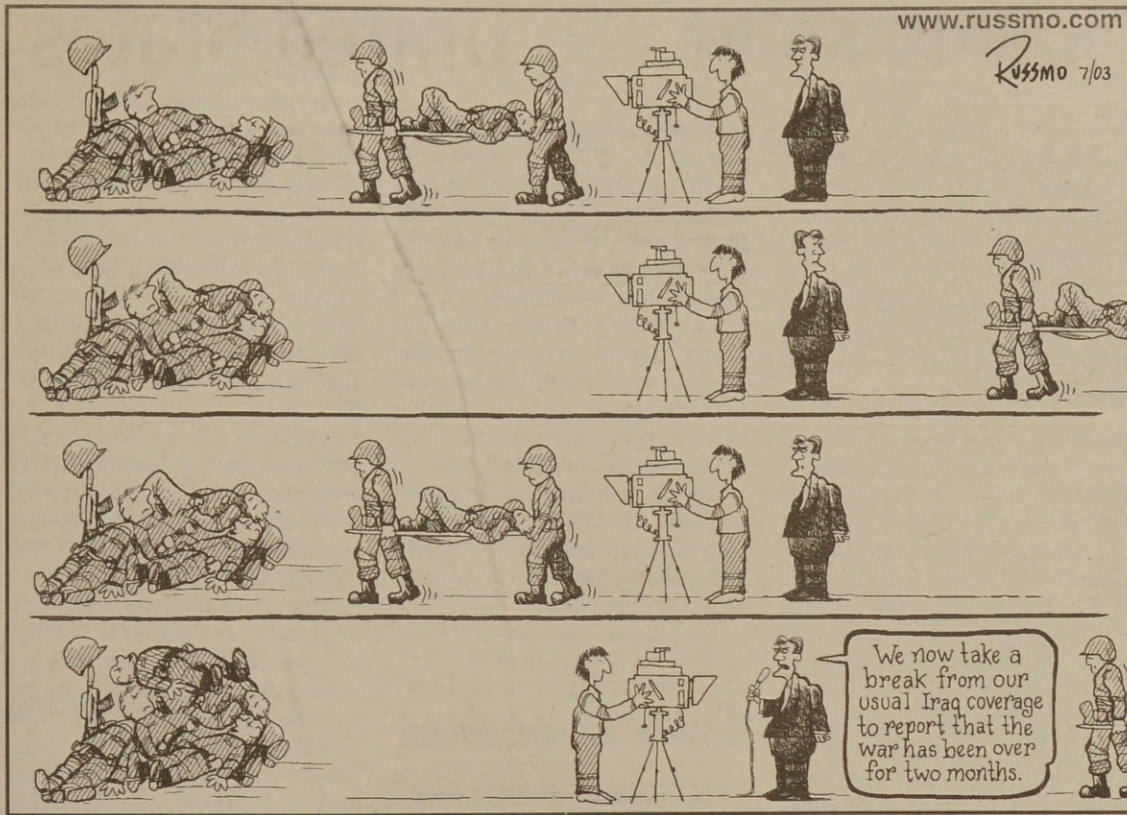
It's happened before, noted Friedman. During the country's last huge

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THE MAILBOX



■ Use RICO in Illinois?

After reading the August 2003 article about the Illinois GOP and Treasurer Judy Topinka using state workers to try to disqualify LP petitions ["Federal grand jury investigates charges of illegal anti-LP activity by Illinois GOP"], I asked myself if there isn't more that can be done against those criminals beyond a grand jury investigation.

What about a RICO case? It's pretty obvious that the GOP in Illinois is a criminal enterprise; why not use the federal government's own tools to rid the state of a huge band of political gangsters?

— **MICHAEL PUSCHAUER**
Oxford, Connecticut

■ Don't do the crime

"Michigan: LP starts cyber-petition against bad driver 'tax'" [Affiliate News, August 2003]. Speeding and running red lights are not "minor" violations. They are behaviors that jeopardize other people's life and property.

Why would LP members oppose additional penalties on habitual criminals, such as drivers who accumulate 7+ points over two years? Because they "care about people who cannot afford to pay the outrageous annual penalty"?

We're supposed to be in favor of individual responsibility. Y'know, like, "If you can't pay the fine, don't do the crime."

— **TERRY WINTROUB**
Lawrenceville, New Jersey

■ Meta-confusion

Can anyone explain the meaning of "meta-contextual," a word (?) that

I cannot find in any of several dictionaries?

I could scarcely make any sense of the article "Using the Left's meta-contextual language" [The Forum, August 2003].

— **BRADLEY BOBBS**
Calabasas, California

Editor's note: "Meta" is from the Greek, meaning "beyond" or "behind." In this case, "meta-contextual" refers to the unspoken assumptions, beliefs, and worldview that underlie the language used by the Left.

**WHO CARES IF
the death penalty
is a deterrent?
People on death
row have proven
that they can't live
in a sane society.**

■ This barbaric act

Let me add some support to John H. Gibson's advocacy for the party to take a stand against the death penalty ["The death penalty: It's time for us to oppose it," The Forum, August 2003].

Capital punishment is the ultimate abuse of power by the state. If I capture an assailant in the act of committing a capital crime and summarily execute him, I would be con-

demned by society as a murderer. Killing a defenseless person rendered harmless by capture is murder whether done by an individual or a state. In effect, the state ends up sanctioning by its own act the very behavior it seeks to condemn.

Further, the state regularly uses the threat of the death penalty to obtain coerced confessions that are as tainted as any obtained by torture.

I can think of no issue dearer to the libertarian cause than stopping this barbaric act of pure vengeance by the state.

— **GEORGE MCGEE**
Wexford, Pennsylvania

■ Put to death

Regarding John H. Gibson's death penalty article in the August LP News, I'm so sick of hearing about whether it's a deterrent or not.

Who cares! These people on death row have proven that they can't live in a sane society, and they should be put to death a year later.

None of these appeals after appeals. I don't want my tax dollars going to these scumbags for food, shelter, health care, etc.

Just have them put to death by having someone put their hands around their throat and choke them to death for all the misery they've caused.

— **VERNON NAYLOR**
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

■ Ticket victimization

I would like to respond to Bill Winter ["Six victimless crime laws that should be repealed immediately," Libertarian Solutions, August 2003].

See **MAILBOX** Page 20

THE PULSE

Making amendments

It's the taxes, stupid.

At least, that's the big-government problem most LP News readers would tackle first, if they could write a new Constitutional amendment.

In response to this month's unscientific Pulse question — "What Constitutional amendment could you write that would: 1) Promote liberty, and 2) Have a good chance of passing?" — LP News readers submitted about 70 separate suggestions.

In first place, with 15.7% of the total votes, were various strategies to reduce (or eliminate) federal taxes. Cut off the fuel — tax money — and government can't grow, these folks suggest. Specific proposals ranged from repealing the 16th Amendment to making federal taxes voluntary.

Coming in second place (with 10%) were various amendments to impose a general curb on government power. These ranged from strictly limiting the government to Constitutionally enumerated powers, to this pithy gem: "Congress shall make no law."

Tied for third place (with 7.1%) were plans to limit the ability of the government to spend money, and to toss politicians out of office (or try them for treason) if they violated the Constitution.

In fourth place (with 5.7%) were proposals to force politicians to learn the Constitution, or cite it in any legislation they propose.

And coming in fifth (with 4.3%) were three amendments: To restrict the government's ability to meddle in commerce; to impose term limits; and to reduce the national debt or curb deficit spending.

Here is a representative sample of the results of this impromptu Libertarian Constitutional Convention:

■ No law which increases revenue will take effect until approved by majority vote of the people in a general election. This includes, but is not limited to, taxes, excises, tariffs, fees, and fines.

— **L. R. MAHANNAH**, Belmont, California

■ Any and all members of Congress that vote for a law that is later struck down as unconstitutional shall be convicted of treason, immediately be removed from office and lose all government benefits.

— **JONATHAN OESTERHELD**, Rockford, Illinois

■ The purchase of votes being detrimental to good government, any citizen who receives income from the federal government is banned from voting in any federal election during the calendar year in which they received this income.

— **BRET DOERR**, Traverse City, Michigan

■ My tongue-in-cheek answer is: A truth-in-slogan amendment. This would require that all government slogans be demonstrably true. We would start with our money: Instead of "In God We Trust," it would be changed to: "We Want Your Stuff."

— **DAN KUTTNER**, San Diego, California

■ Strict term limits for Congress. Four terms for the House and two terms for the Senate would do wonders. It is doable; voters love it.

— **E.W. ANDERSON**, Naples, New York

■ We already have a Constitutional amendment that applies. It's called the 10th Amendment. Unfortunately, the politicians won't abide by it.

— **HARRY THOMPSON**, Tucson, Arizona

■ Congress shall make no law.

— **CHAD ELWARTOWSKI**, Augusta, Georgia

■ I would pass an amendment that would not allow the federal government to borrow money unless two-thirds of the state governments voted on accepting this debt.

— **MICHAEL LINDER**, Edgewood, Maryland

■ No Congressperson shall vote on a bill to become law until he or she has read it in its entirety.

— **CHARLES CARNES**, Warsaw, Indiana

■ All federally licensed broadcasters including radio, TV, cable and satellite, would be required to give equal free time to all federal candidates within their broadcast areas.

— **KENNETH A. DRAKE**, St. Peters, Missouri

■ No riders of any kind may be attached to a bill at hand. This would immediately stop politicians from sneaking in any foolish "pet projects" under the radar.

— **JACK CARROLL**, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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THE PULSE

Continued from Page 19

■ The Sixteenth Amendment to this Constitution is hereby repealed.
— DANIEL MCGOLDRICK, San Rafael, California

■ Congress may not exempt itself or its agents from compliance, in whole or in part, with any federal law or regulation.
— FRANK CLARKE, Oldsmar, Florida

■ All Congressional pay raises will be voted on by the people. It will need a two-thirds majority of the voters voting in that election. All raises will become effective in the next Congress.
— NICK ROSATELLI, Toms River, New Jersey

■ The Congress and the president shall raise no revenue by means of coercion. The Congress and the president shall have the duty of soliciting the People for the revenue to carry out their delegated powers.
— WILLIAM T. KANE, Vernon, New Jersey

■ Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of education, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.
— SAM PARSONS, Seymour, Indiana

■ Limit the number of federal employees to a (small) percentage of the population — say, 1%.
— PAUL R. KUHN, Bradford, Pennsylvania

■ Neither the federal government nor any state can pass any law infringing on the right of the individual to live in whatever manner he or she chooses as long as he or she does not forcibly interfere with the equal right of others to live in whatever manner others choose.
— WILLIAM BERRY, New Bedford, Massachusetts

■ **Editor's note:** To read another two dozen amendments proposed by *LP News* readers, see the expanded online edition of The Pulse at: www.LP.org/lpnews/0309/pulse.html

Nov. Question: Infiltrate Rs & Ds?

Is it time for the Libertarian Party to heed the advice, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em?" After 30+ years of political activity, the Libertarian Party has yet to elect the mayor of a major city, a governor, a U.S. Representative, or a president. Is it time to try something radically different? The strategy (suggested by Jeff Fisher of Vancouver, Washington) is this: Libertarians should stop running for office as partisan Libertarians, and, instead, seek the nominations of the Democratic or Republican parties. If the strategy worked — and if these covert Libertarians got through the primaries and were elected to office in sufficient numbers — could Libertarians begin to have a real pro-liberty impact on the political process? More importantly, could we infiltrate and redefine the two older parties, and transform them into parties that advocated genuine liberty?

■ **QUESTION:** Would Libertarians be more successful if we infiltrated the Republican and Democratic parties — and ran for office as Rs and Ds? (Keep answers to 100 words or less.)

■ **DEADLINE:** October 8, 2003

Oct. Question: Support the FairTax?

Ask Americans for Fair Taxation why they support the FairTax — a federal sales tax — and they rattle off the reasons: The IRS and income tax would be abolished. You'd be able to keep every penny from your paycheck. It's a "voluntary" tax: The more you purchase, the more you pay in taxes; the less you buy, the less you pay.

Under the FairTax proposal, the federal government would levy a 23% tax on all goods and services. This new national sales tax would replace the income tax, Social Security FICA taxes, and Medicare taxes. (The small print: Used goods and business purchases would not be taxed. To ease the tax's burden on the poor, the federal government would send a monthly rebate check to cover the 23% consumption tax spent on necessities, up to the federal poverty level.)

While the FairTax wouldn't reduce taxes, supporters say it is a step in a libertarian direction. So, our question (suggested by Jerry Dixon, Santee, California): Should the LP support the FairTax?

■ **QUESTION:** Should the Libertarian Party support the FairTax as a way to eliminate the IRS and income tax, and to make taxes simpler and more fair? (Please keep answers to 100 words or less.)

■ **DEADLINE:** September 8, 2003

ENTRY GUIDELINES: Include your name and your city/state; anonymous answers won't be tallied! Enter just once per month.

■ **E-mail:** Editor@hq.LP.org. (Put "Pulse" in subject line.)

■ **Fax:** (202) 333-0072 (Attn: The Pulse).

■ **Mail:** Bill Winter, Attn: *LP News/The Pulse*, 1640 Worcester Road, #330-D, Framingham, MA 01702

THE MAILBOX

Continued from Page 19

I couldn't agree more with him on the repeal of five of the six laws (and perhaps even on the sixth). But I believe he is mistaken on two points.

First, he identifies the reason for anti-scalping laws as being related to tax revenues. I don't believe the laws have anything to do with the state "not getting its cut."

I, however, have experienced victimization at the hands of scalpers who engage in wholesale purchases of hundreds of tickets in order to sell them at inflated prices.

I have missed many shows because someone had bought out the house at \$25 a ticket and sold them at \$100 or \$200 per ticket. They knew that people with more money than sense are going to see certain concerts and shows no matter what the price.

I, on the other hand, could not afford them, but could have at \$25. I tried to buy them online within minutes of their availability but was too late. This is the target of those laws.

Point number two: The reason seatbelt laws have become so popular with governments is due to revenue. These laws began as safety issues, but it soon became apparent that large sums of money could be funneled into state, county, and city coffers from the fines.

Sometimes enhanced enforcement of traffic laws are aimed at making the streets safer but, having been a patrol officer, I can tell you that most of the time the goal is gold for the government. Many times a patrol sergeant has admonished the troops to "go out and write some tickets."

— BILL SHAW
Pineville, Louisiana

Freedom of choice

[The August Libertarian Solutions column offered] more great examples of political double standards and hypocrisy. These guys never give up.

Re: scalping tickets: It's illegal to sell popular tickets in the open market place, for more than face value.

Yet when car dealers, and car buyers agree to a premium price over the sticker price, it's called supply and demand. Ya gotta love it.

Or when investors pay more than market value for shares of stock, it's called participating in the capitalistic system (or stupidity).

Either way, I call it freedom of choice.

— HARRY THOMPSON
Tucson, Arizona

Seatbelt laws

Victimless crime laws: Good article, in general. However, it could be argued that strict seatbelt laws are consistent with Libertarian Party principles. They have the effect to mitigate everybody's exposure to legal and civil consequences of driving errors, not to mention all the pain and suffering.

The theory is simple. If a driver could assume all the risk of not using the safety equipment, none of us Libertarians would object to him doing so. However, by not wearing his

seat belts, he imputes additional risk to all of us!

The simplest example is when one of us is at fault completely and collides with him, an innocent, unbelted driver. He may suffer more extensive injuries than he otherwise would if he was securely belted in. It is problematic that an argument could be made for contributory negligence on the part of the innocent party for failure to use belts, especially in the case of serious or fatal injuries.

We are then in a position of facing much stiffer legal and civil consequences, placing our own liberty and pursuit of happiness in jeopardy.

— ALLAN I. PRESSER
Las Animas, Colorado

HAVE EXPERIENCED victimization at the hands of scalpers who engage in wholesale purchases of tickets to sell them at inflated prices.

Grammatical evidence

I doubt that the quotation attributed to Mark Twain in *LP News* of August was really Twain's, based on the grammar ["Twain or Tucker," The MailBox].

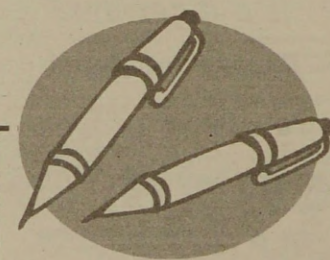
He scarcely made a grammatical error, but the quotation reads "No man's life, liberty or property are safe while the legislature is in session."

Twain would have written "is," not "are." If the conjunction had been "and" instead of "or," "are" would have been correct.

— DAN ALTHOFF
Jacksonville, Florida

Dues debate

While the debate goes on about a possible dues hike [*LP News*, August 2003], there is one type of idea I do



Make Your Voice Heard!

LP News welcomes letters.
Send correspondence to:

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Fax: (202) 333-0072
(Attn: *LP News*).

Mail: Bill Winter, Attn: *LP News*,
1640 Worcester Road, #330-D,
Framingham, MA 01702

not see being discussed.

My Internet service provider grants me a free month of service for every new customer I bring them. It has worked well for them, proving itself a good business model.

I advocate that the LP grant membership fee discounts for membership referrals. Provide fields on membership forms to identify exactly which existing member, if any, got a new member to join, and give that existing member a discount as a reward. The more referrals, the greater the discount.

Of course the numbers could be fine-tuned, perhaps requiring a minimum amount of referrals before a discount applies, or perhaps imposing referral caps, etc. There is much flexibility in this system.

This is also a win-win solution. It gives members a chance to alleviate any new financial burden. It grows membership, offsetting to some degree the inevitable loss we will incur from the dues hike. And it could provide a revenue that the party did not have to begin with by increasing grassroots recruitment.

In addition, this idea could perhaps be expanded in creative ways. Though of course we want to be careful to protect against "time-sheet fraud," it may be possible to devise schemes to grant dues discounts for, say, those who volunteer certain minimum hours in LP sanctioned election or ballot campaigns that succeed at the polls.

These sorts of ideas give a market incentive for members to grow the party and advance our issues at the polls. And after all, that is what we are all about: market solutions.

— DAVID MOOTER
Shaker Heights, Ohio

Examining Islam

With all due respect to Dean Ahmad, he presents Islam as if it were an ongoing source, in and of itself, of Western values ["Just like the rest of the world, what Iraq really needs is liberty," The Forum, August 2003].

True, Islam does recognize private property. But Islamic law treats property as belonging to an individual only if he is in possession of and using it. Thus, if an owner leaves his property for an extended period of time, he is considered to have abandoned it, and the property becomes available to the "Umma," or community of believers.

To be sure, Salah-a-Din (Saladin) was an honorable man, setting an example that even Richard the Lion-Heart respected. We should acknowledge him for his role in the Magna Carta. Whereas he adhered to the principle that no man is above the law, the subsequent history of Islam shows how principles are not always reflective of reality. Because of a lack of separation of church and state, a ruler could claim the title "Defender of the Faith(ful)" and become the law.

When Islam turned in on itself, in the wake of the Crusades, I can only conclude that they forgot what made Islamic civilization so great in the first place, the interplay of thought and learning, reformatted in the new context of Islam.

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THE MAILBOX

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Once reformatted, Islamic thinkers closed the doors to the outside, especially to new ideas. In 500 years, so few books were translated into Arabic that it is possible to count them on one's fingers.

Islam has deep reservoirs that can contribute to Western Civilization, but we must understand them both in the abstract and in practice.

To say that Islam already has Western values begs the issue. It is blatantly obvious that Islam does not implement these values in Western ways. May it be that the very understanding of these values, when in context, is different?

— DAVID PETERS

Los Angeles, California

What purpose?

It's good to seek out the vast variety of opinion from Libertarians of all stripes, but what purpose is served by publishing Andrew Lohr's insults against Libertarians who don't believe in God? [The MailBox, August 2003]

After absurdly linking the unitary God of Islam (and by extension Judaism) to one-party rule, Mr. Lohr implies that I and other skeptics pattern our lives after Stalin and Kim Jong Il, whom he identifies as atheists. (It's possible they were, although each tried to establish a theism with themselves as cult object.) He might as well have bashed Caucasians and Asians — Stalin and Kim were certainly these.

The Libertarian "Big Tent" is served by reader discussion of political issues, but not by reader attacks on fellow Libertarians who don't sit in the same pew.

— STAN LYNES

Auburndale, Massachusetts

Saddam vs. Jefferson

Libertarians, who in accordance with the advice of Thomas Jefferson, question with boldness even the existence of God, should be commended not vilified. All people regardless of their religious belief should admire the courage to follow the advice of Thomas Jefferson.

Andrew Lohr attempts to vilify clear-thinking libertarians, Barry

Rowe and Herb Gassman, by associating them with Stalin.

Actually, it is more appropriate to associate theists with Saddam Hussein and non-theists with Thomas Jefferson. Hussein worships the same God that Jesus Christ worshiped and that Lohr worships. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are all based on the same God of the Old Testament.

Jefferson made clear statements for human freedom and individual liberty in his extensive writings. Jesus Christ is not mentioned in any non-forged ancient text outside of the Bible and there is no evidence in the Bible that he made any clear and unambiguous statements for liberty and freedom.

The Biblical chapter, I Timothy 2, referred to by Lohr says of women, "I do not permit women to teach...they should keep quiet." It says nothing of protecting liberty.

— ROBERT H. BIGGADIKE

West Covina, California

Editor's note: For the record, the Libertarian Party advocates neither atheism nor Christianity. Religion is a personal, not political issue. The LP Platform states: "We defend the rights of individuals to engage in (or abstain from) any religious activities that do not violate the rights of others. In order to defend freedom, we advocate a strict separation of church and State."

Focus on youth

In May, I lost a suburban Dallas school board race by only 19 votes. Surprising, yes, because — as a 22-year-old — I had become only the second-youngest person to ever run for a seat on the Midlothian Independent School District's school board.

But despite the fact I'm only two years removed from the MISD, as a high school graduate, and the loss, I did in fact raise more money than my three opponents.

And though I didn't win, I still count this latest campaign jaunt as an important victory for the future. The campaign showed that a young person, if armed with knowledge of the issues and name recognition, can in fact play a major role in shaping

local government policy.

Which is why the Libertarian Party needs to actively recruit more young people — high school, college-aged students, guys and girls — if the party is to succeed.

One of the main reasons I ran to begin with was to show my former classmates that the younger people that are our future need to step up to the plate and start taking active roles in leadership positions.

Granted, we don't have a celebrity candidate such as Ralph Nader plowing the campuses, but by networking, such as through the Internet a la Howard Dean, the LP can establish a "minor league" and then in turn, begin to groom our next round of candidates.

The fact I am a reporter for a local newspaper also helped me, as far as name recognition goes, but there is still more work to be done if an LP youth movement is to be successful.

If the LP is to survive then we have got to concentrate on the high school and college campuses. Because if we don't, the future of our party is in jeopardy.

— JOEY DAUBEN

Red Oak, Texas

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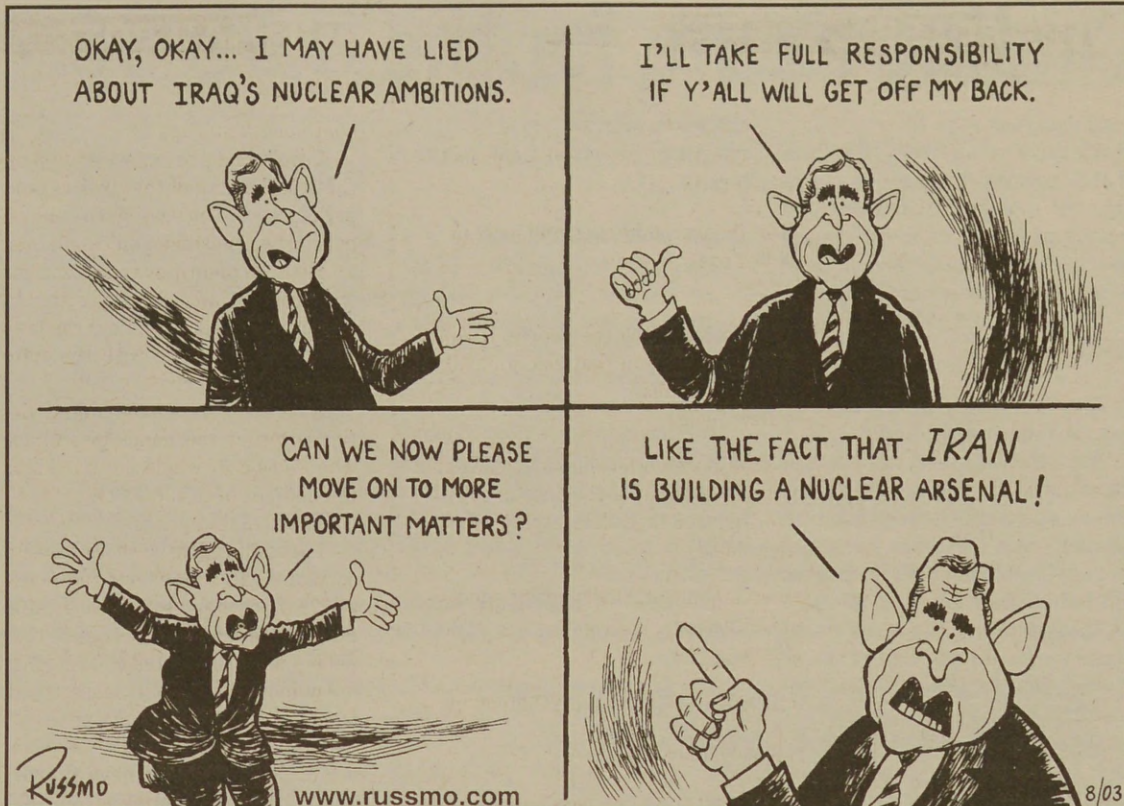
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Inalienable rights

The concept of inalienable rights being "creator given" can be accepted by Libertarians of all faiths, including the many Libertarian atheists [The MailBox, July-August 2003].

We were all created. I believe I was created through a process of evolution. If you want to believe in a supernatural creation, that's fine by me.

The important concept is simple. We are born with certain rights. These rights are not bestowed by politicians, constitutions, or religions, and neither is morality.

— JIM BABB

Norristown, Pennsylvania

A regular mistake

I just read the letter "Back to Platform" [The MailBox, August 2003]. It repeats a regular mistake. It points out what [previous U.S. foreign policy] should have done better.

If you are on a trip and miss your exit, what should you do? Should you figure out the best way to get where you are going, based on your actual situation? Or should you just keep saying, "I should've taken that exit back there?"

Assume you are driving with

someone who has a map, and you ask, "How do I get back to Route 34?"

They reply: "If you took the exit like you should have, you could take a right at the lights. It would have been easy if you did the right thing in the first place."

How long do you keep listening to them?

— WILLIAM BERRY

New Bedford, Massachusetts

Winnable war?

I've always thought the weakest argument libertarians use against the War on Drugs (or poverty, etc.) is that it is "unwinnable."

True, but beside the point and easily refutable. The easy reply is that we can never end rape and murder either, but that doesn't mean we don't have to try. That leads to the real objection to the Drug War — that unlike murder it's a peaceful activity without victims.

Now the appeasers are trying to use the same sad "unwinnable" ploy to argue against doing anything about the terrorists who have declared war on us. See letters from Jonathan Trager and Louis Roninger in July issue.

These folks should note that terror attacks resemble murder a lot more than they do drug use.

— WALTER BALES

Anaheim, California

Membership theory

It occurred to me that perhaps one of the reasons the Libertarian Party has experienced a decline in membership is due to provisions in the USA/Patriot Act. There are many not wanting their names appearing on some governmental list identifying potential troublemakers.

Has the government asked you for any membership lists?

Oops... I forgot. According to the USA/Patriot Act, you could not answer this question for fear of prosecution.

— DAN PLOGER

Smithville, Tennessee

Finding a cure for the U.S.'s \$6.7 trillion debt problem

Continued from Page 18
deficit spike in the 1980s, "the share of U.S. national income devoted to net new investment in plant and equipment fell to the lowest average level in the postwar period, and real wages — and therefore the income of the typical U.S. family — stagnated."

3) It makes future generations pay for today's spending.

When the government runs a deficit, it is "essentially taking money from one generation and giving it to another," said Creighton University economics professor Ernie Goss in the *Salt Lake Tribune* (July 20, 2003).

That's because the government has to eventually pay off the money it owes. For example, this year, the Treasury paid off the last of the 30-year bonds it borrowed to finance the final year of the Vietnam War. So, today's young taxpayers are paying for the mistakes of Richard Nixon, just as tomorrow's taxpayers will pay for the mistakes of George W. Bush.

The immorality of deficit spending prompted Thomas Jefferson to write in 1791: "We should consider ourselves unauthorized to saddle posterity with our debts, and morally bound to pay them ourselves."

Given the damage caused by defi-

cits, here's what we should do to start restoring the government to fiscal health:

1) Cut government spending

The "cure" for a deficit is no different than the cure for obesity, which is: Eat less and exercise more. Translated into fiscal policy, it's: Spend less and exercise more self-restraint.

Politicians don't agree. Republicans say the deficit is caused by a dip in tax revenues and the cost of fighting terrorism. Democrats say the deficit is caused by President Bush's modest tax cuts.

However, in their more honest moments, even politicians admit the real cause.

"These are spending-driven deficits," U.S. Rep. Jim Nussle (R-IA), chairman of the House Budget Committee, told Fox News on July 16, 2003.

The numbers reveal the truth, reported Bloomberg News columnist Caroline Baum (July 22, 2003).

"The dirty little secret that neither party wants to talk about is that President George W. Bush is a big spender," she wrote.

"Stripping out the increase in national defense outlays, discretionary spending rose 12.3% in fiscal 2002



and will rise 12.6% in 2003."

Adding in his 2001 spending, Bush has increased non-defense discretionary spending by 20.8% (adjusted for inflation), noted Baum. That's more than the full four-year term of Jimmy Carter (up 13.8%) or the second term of Bill Clinton (up 8.2%).

If politicians need suggestions about what to cut, they could look at the Cato Handbook for Congress, which lists dozens of programs ripe for the budget ax.

The government could move the budget back into surplus territory, notes Cato, by turning Social Security into a system of individual savings accounts; by privatizing all government-operated businesses, such as Amtrak and the U.S. Postal Service; and by selling excess federal land and buildings.

2) Don't raise taxes.

As the Cato Institute's Veronique de Rugy wrote (March 24, 2003), raising taxes was tried as a method of combatting deficits during the Great Depression. It failed.

Faced with a growing deficit, presidents Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt boosted the top income tax rate from 25% to 79%, and corporate taxes from 12% to 25%. The result: The deficit jumped from \$2.2 billion in 1932 to \$2.9 billion in 1940, wrote de Rugy.

"A key problem in trying to balance the budget with tax increases is that higher taxes fuel more [government] spending," she wrote. "[Also], the hikes contract the tax base by reducing economic growth and spurring greater tax avoidance."

For those reasons, de Rugy pi-

quantly noted, "raising taxes to balance a budget is like drinking a six-pack to cure a hangover."

3) Pass a strict balanced-budget Constitutional amendment.

Congress can take a cue from the LP Platform, which gives a prescription for such an amendment.

The LP Platform supports "the drive for a Constitutional amendment requiring the national government to balance its budget." To be effective, the Platform says, the amendment would permit no overrides; forbid off-budget items; prohibit tax increases; and allow no exceptions for any "national emergency."

Of course, the drawback of an amendment is that politicians may simply find ways to evade it.

Cheating is something politicians are good at. Over the past decade, to evade self-imposed spending caps, Washington, DC politicians pioneered a number of bookkeeping techniques that would have landed them in jail had they worked for a private company.

For example, they slipped the cost of the 2000 Census into an off-budget "emergency spending" bill. (The Census was hardly an emergency or a surprise: It's been conducted once a decade since 1790.)

So, yes, politicians will cheat. But if a balanced budget amendment makes it more difficult for them to spend the nation into bankruptcy, it's worth doing.

Conclusion

To some degree, the deficit is the product of a politically schizophrenic American public that is anti-tax but pro-spending.

In other words, most Americans don't want their federal taxes to go up, but they do want to keep receiving federal checks for Medicare, Social Security, and college loans.

Politicians, eager to please, promise more government benefits, while vowing not to raise taxes. They plunge the government into debt so they can keep handing out goodies.

That almost irresistible temptation to spend today — and let someone else pay tomorrow — may be why Thomas Jefferson once wrote that public debt is "the greatest of dangers to be feared."

Of course, it's not the *only* danger big government poses. That's why Libertarians want a federal government that is much, much smaller than it is today.

Merely balancing the budget won't accomplish that; a budget balanced at \$2.2 trillion would be no victory. However, a balanced budget would, at the very least, herald a return to fiscal honesty, would stop boosting the cost of government with exorbitant interest payments, and would stop shifting the cost of today's spending onto tomorrow's taxpayers.

For all those reasons, a balanced budget could be the *beginning* — but not the end — of more fundamental Libertarian efforts to genuinely reduce the cost of government.

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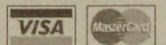
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Tom Palmer (director, Cato University), Don Boudreaux (George Mason University), and Dan Griswold (Center for Trade Policy Studies, Cato Institute). For information, visit: www.cato-university.org.

October 16, 2003

Heartland Institute's 19th Anniversary Benefit Dinner, Hilton Chicago Hotel, Chicago, Illinois. Speakers include Robert Poole (founder, Reason Foundation), Rev. Floyd Flake (former Congressman), Brian Wesbury (economic forecaster), Scott Hodge, (executive director, Tax Foundation), and M. Stanton Evans (comic). For information, visit: www.heartland.org. Or call: (312) 377-4000.

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"Toward a Free and Virtuous Society" Student Conference, Dawsonville, Georgia. Sponsored by the Acton Institute. An "introduction to the principles of liberty" for students of religion, theology, philosophy, and related fields. For information, call: (616) 454-3080. Or visit: www.acton.org.

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The Freedom Summit, Best Western Grace Inn at Ahwatukee, Phoenix, Arizona. An "annual seminar dedicated to promoting and advancing human freedom." Speakers include Nathaniel Branden (author, *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*), Ron Paul (Congressman, R-TX), Harry Browne (1996 and 2000 LP presidential candidate), Boston T. Party (author, *You and the Police*), Vin Suprynowicz (syndicated columnist). For information, visit: www.freedomsummit.com.

October 23-26, 2003

Cato University Fall Weekend Seminar, Le Chateau Frontenac, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada. Sponsored by the Cato Institute. Speakers include

October 25, 2003

Sixth Annual Colorado LP Awards Banquet and Workshop Day, Ramada Inn, Colorado Springs. Speakers include Sharon Harris (president, Advocates for Self-Government). For information, call Nancy Graves: (719) 570-0747. Or e-mail: ladynancy@pcisys.net. Or visit: http://lpep.org/Special_Event/banquet.php.



November 1, 2003

New Hampshire LP Convention, Highlander Inn, Manchester. Speakers include Craig Benson (governor, New Hampshire) and Richard Boddie (president, The Motivators). For information, call: (800) 559-LPNH. Or write: LPNH, P.O. Box 5293, Manchester, NH 03108.

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Florida LP Convention, Holiday Inn-University Center, Gainesville. Speakers TBA. For information, visit: www.geocities.com/gilsonde/LPF2004Conv.html. Or call: (800) 478-0555.

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California LP Convention, San Jose DoubleTree Hotel, San Jose. Speakers TBA. For information, e-mail: mark@garlic.com. Or visit: www.ca.LP.org.

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Libertarian Presidential Nominating Convention, Marriott Atlanta Marquis Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia. Speakers TBA. Questions, comments, suggestions, e-mail: convention@hq.LP.org.

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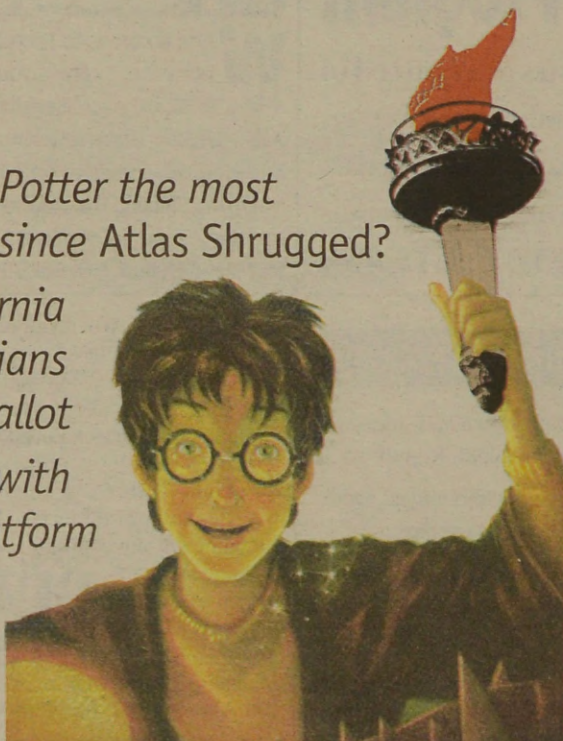
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FIRST WORD

"When it comes to economics, [Libertarians] are right on target. Libertarian economic philosophy may be our last hope of escaping the tax burden that is threatening the vitality of nations all around the world."

— DOUG PATTON, www.GOPUSA.com, June 16, 2003

"Libertarianism is gaining in popularity."

— JONAH GOLDBERG, *National Review Online*, June 16, 2003

"In the headlong rush toward ever bigger and more expensive federal programs, we are getting further and further from the limited government defined so clearly in the U.S. Constitution. Do you think any of the Founding Fathers would recognize America today as the republic they worked so hard and sacrificed so much to give us? We have run roughshod over the Constitution — putting in things that were never intended, and ignoring basic principles of the once-revered document. It seems the only remaining political party that supports the constitutional ideal of limited government is the Libertarian Party."

— CHARLES BROOKS, *The Mississippi Press* (Pascagoula), July 2, 2003